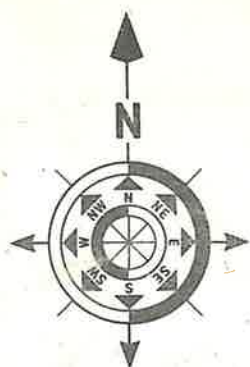


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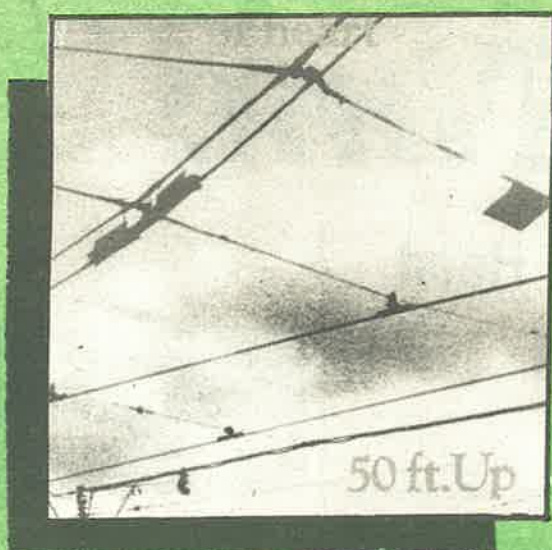
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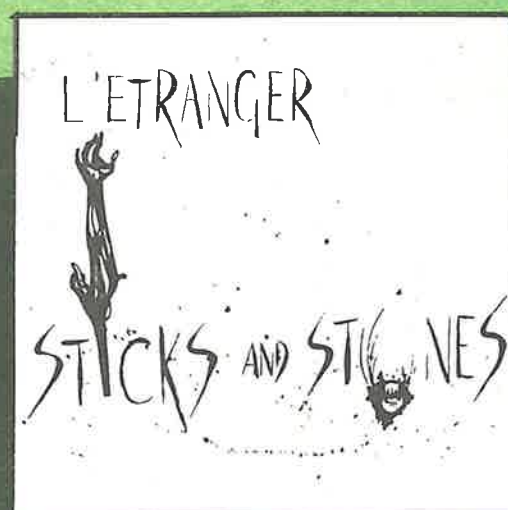
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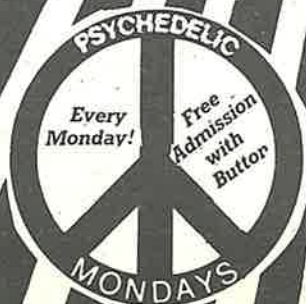
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TUCCHINI
TimeMonster:
A Revved Up Teenage HeadB.F. "Mole" Mowat
dishes out the supersnazz

A couple of issues back, Phillip Delfio introduced Hammer alumni Frank Venom & the Vypers, stating that he felt the Vypers were maintaining the true Teenage Head tradition with the new outfit.

As a long-time observer of the local scene, I must take exception to that remark. Frank's group and approach is considerably different, which is why Frank and Nick left Teenage Head in the first place.

As a result, the Head's musical legacy is now in the hands of the people who started the whole enchilada, long before you were born.

To recap: Teenage Head was formed by Gord Lewis and Steve Marshall back in 1973, after they saw The Stooges at the Victory, and the Dolls at Massey Hall (with Kiss opening!). Frank originally joined as a drummer because Nick was playing YMCA gigs with his brother's band. Frank was (and still is) the Presley/Cochrane acolyte.

In fact, it was Dave "Rave" Desroches who sang lead vocals for the first Head gig back in '74. In the ten-year interim, Dave established himself as a more than adequate singer/songwriter a la Nick Lowe with his group the Shakers, who released two LPs, *In Time*, and *Weekend* and sundry 45s that received the most attention outside this country. "Blitz" fanzine in L.A. went as far as saying that *Weekend* beat the Blasters on their own musical territory!

While Dave plans to use a lot of his own material for Head projects, he'll also maintain a solo career to "issue material that wouldn't fit the Head's approach." An example of such is the 'Lipstick Lies' 45 released last year—a moody ballad that lingers in your mind like the taste of BBQ Corn Chips on the tongue.

The other part of the re-vamped lineup is new drummer Blair "Mojo" Martin, who was the frontman for the late, great Raving Mojos. Anybody who seriously questions Mr. Martin's garage-rock credentials should be attacked with a barrage of stale pizza crusts. Recruiting him on drums was a stroke of genius.



Steve, Dave, Gord, Blair —Blazing Entertainment

A couple of observations here:

□The three times I have seen the Head in their new configuration have all been high-energy/high-spirited rockin' good times. The band played like it had a reason to exist. The gig that sticks in my mind was the first night that Dave had to assume lead vocal duties in front of a hometown audience. That night, the band played like they had a gun to its head—one of the best shows I've seen by any group. I would recommend that all bands play under such conditions.

□The public, that fickle animal that decides who swims and who sinks, has not abandoned the Head. "At first there were cries of 'where's Frank,' but they got used to me pretty quick," mused Dave. (The flip side of this story involves people shouting out for Teenage Head numbers at Vyper shows.)

□The last observation on the current state of Head affairs goes to Gary Pig who once wrote: "A band should either break up or have a major personnel change every 5 years or so to remain interesting" (Pig Paper No. 10-1978).

All this should have happened long ago, friends, and to conclude with a cliché, "better late than never."

FARM UPDATE

It would appear that top group L'Etranger are breaking up after bassist Tim Vesely and keyboardist Bruce PM announced plans to leave the group. L'Etranger just this month released their third and most commercial EP, the first with Vesely, who joined the group on a sabbatical from his other band Rheostatics, replacing founder member and songwriter Chuck Angus. Needless to say, this band should have been heard by a lot more people, and it's criminal that a band like this never got signed to a deal and heard by the mass of Confused Youth. Too bad. Mainman Andy Cash plans to continue (possibly with drummer Pete Duffin) as a solo folk act.

Top new-wave jazz punk band Garbagemen have also split, leaving the Cameron House without a regular Wednesday night attraction. It's not known if leader Howie Zephyr (ex-Rent Boys) has plans to form another group. Drummer Glenn Milchem plays for Vital Sines and Whitenoise, while guitarist Howie Moskovitch also plays for Whitenoise.

Readers of the CASBY article in this issue who are curious as to why Mr. David Marsden's thoughts on the topic were missing; he failed to call the Nerve office for his appointed interview on three separate occasions. We hope he enjoys the article anyway; bereft, as it is, of his comments.

Here's some scam or other: EXPO acknowledges the usefulness of the fashionable derelicts populating the 'happening scene' in Vancouver by booking a festival of streetworthy and credible alternative bands as part of the glorious celebrations. The first band on the bill—Slow—blow the show after lead singer Tom Anselmi attempts an unscheduled public display of an unheralded art treasure—his great grandfather's undershorts—which he revealed by casting aside his trousers. The authorities were very impressed, but cancelled the rest of the festival regardless. Now, if the band perpetrated this offence while singing the Butthole Surfers' 'Lady Sniff', maybe that would be sufficient grounds for banishment, but people taking off their clothing, undershorts or no undershorts, is hardly worthy of controversy. But then again, as Slow's Anselmi puts it, "rock 'n roll is a confrontational art anyways, and we completely laid out to them what we're about. That happens at a lot of our shows, when the audience looks bored." Gosh! Put me on the guest list!

Now, my last encounter with Slow involved coercing their bassist away from what I considered to be a dangerous psychic intercourse with my blaster, which was blasting Sabbath's *Masters Of Reality* at the time. So I'll allow they could be potentially hazardous to your health. But the casualties at the infamous Slow vs. EXPO gig were low, and many of the bands have had their gigs reinstated. Happy ending.

Montreal's OG Records (which is basically Gerard and Tony from Deja Voodoo) release evil new records this month, including the third Voodoo album *Swamp Of Love*; a second *It Came From Canada* compilation; and a platter from Montreal's trashmen The Gruesomes. YyaaaggGHHHIKKK (sorry).

Look for a new EP from Sturm Group, who are also involved in the distribution of a pretty cool UK music magazine called MONITOR. The glossy B&W publication is more concerned with essays on the relevance of contemporary music than pictures of Morrissey's butt, and is a worthwhile read: at most good record and magazine stores or call Green Fuse at 968-7069

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GRAPHICS AND ILLUSTRATION

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IKON tact

by PHILLIP DELLIO

The Ikons have a name which lends itself to shameless punning: a crucial factor in their inevitable fame. XTC was a seminal band in this regard, spearheaded by the very popular "Agony and the XTC" headline that graced countless interviews and reviews. Husker Du are the favorite sons: 'Husker Du the Du,' 'Husker Du—and They Certainly Did,' 'Du or Die.'

And thus legends are born...the Ikons are a bunch of raving ikonoclasts. Their songs are coded with a complex ikonography. They do a great version of the Dixie Cups' 'Ikon Ikon.' How does the singer pick up girls? It all starts with Ikon tact, of course.

Wait a minute. Let's start over.

"There's the logistical fact that we have bass, drums, and two guitars. I mean, we can't sound like Depeche Mode."

So says John Critchley, singer/guitarist for the Ikons. John is defending their right to a) sound like a guitar band, because b) they use guitars, even though aa) so many other bands sound like guitar bands, because bb) they use guitars, too. Joining John in his dissection of such earth-shattering topics are Mike Robbins(guitar), Grant Ethier (drums), and Jim Hughes(bass). Jim never says anything (the trauma of working record retail) but he is there.

I volunteer the information that of the four times I've seen the Ikons, the first two—birthday shifaced, and any-old-day shifaced—were the best. Is this a band most appreciated while blissfully intoxicated, a band to slump back and lose yourself in?

*(John) "I think we're ideal for drinking. Some bands are more directed towards getting you up and bopping, whereas we're more directed towards sitting in your seat and drinking."

*(Mike) "But to answer your question, there have been drunk guys who hated us, and sober guys who loved us."

*(John) "It's a paradox."

A further paradox is the sweeping romanticism ('The Reunion' and 'A Prayer' are especially beautiful) of songs which are essentially anti-romantic.

*(Mike) "Very rarely do we deal with love requited. Most of the time it's love stopped by some vague form of castration."

*(John) "Jean Genet said the only intelligent things for man to write about are sex and death."

*(Grant) "So that's what John does, week after week."

*(John) "It's better than masturbation."

Many of the lyrics seem grounded in abstraction—strange tales of Indian arrows and heaving pennies placed on your eyes. For me, it builds reserves of mystery into the songs, but John doesn't see it that way.

"I think our lyrics are more clear and defined than most. A song like 'Indian Arrow,' the idea is that Poppa died with an Indian arrow in his head. It's like a legacy of hatred and bigotry, things that are passed on. It's a funny song." (And it's definitely clearer and more defined than most —Ed.)

One thing I can't understand is the band's reluctance to do covers. A tape of Grant's is playing during the interview, and the mix is invigorating—'For What It's Worth' into *Forever Changes* into *Butthole Surfers* into *Yardbirds* into surf-punk. John's impressive record collection is scattered about the room, ranging from opera to the Rain Parade. Jim includes *Meat Puppets II* and *Funhouse* among his preferred records, and Mike is a Neil Young fanatic. With all this exquisite taste lingering around, wouldn't it be a good idea to add a couple of imaginatively chosen covers to the set?

*(John) "It seems right now there's two different ways to do covers. One is to do a sixties



John, Mike, Grant, Jim — Todd Gribbon

cover—it doesn't even have to be obscure. Or there's the school that says you should do Alice Cooper or BTO covers. But why bother?"

*(Grant) "People start coming to see the band to see those covers. A band gets labelled."

*(Mike) "We used to do a couple. At one point, the meat and potatoes of our set—I think someone clocked it at 40-minutes—was a version of 'Down By the River.' One night, we had four guitarists, two bass players, and a drummer-and-a-half. It was good, but never again."

Also unusual—and in this case more than welcome, particularly after having to endure the pinheaded ramblings of Slow's Tom Anselmi—is the absence of stage patter. Nothing to say?

*(Mike) "What's there to talk about?"

*(John) "Hey TORONTO! Havin' a GOOD TIME?"

*(Grant) "We always know that they're not having a good time."

*(John) "Why bother asking?"

Nothing has changed in six months; the Ikons are still my favorite Toronto band, especially now that I'm able to listen to them at home (8-song demo cassette). Looking beyond Toronto, they're the second best band in the world with a drummer named Grant—not as good as Husker Du; but better than Soul Asylum. With the new demo, there's the foundation for a near perfect EP. I hope it happens. As Grant points out, the Ikons are meant to be listened to—what better way than on record?

"John is probably more concerned with dynamics than any musician I've ever met. He likes to take a song and create an atmosphere—by taking you to certain levels as far as energy and dynamics go, and then dropping down very quiet and very slow. 'End of Your Chain' is a perfect example. It makes us hard to dance to, but really great to listen to."

By NICK SMASH
London, England



HOUSE BROKEN

There are a few bands over here at the moment who are getting blanket media coverage focussing on their "Englishness." The Smiths, Lloyd Cole, The Mighty Lemon Drops, The Pastels, and now The Housemartins are all making music dealing with this English way of life. *This England*. The Queen; pubs; Fish'n'Chips; the weather; the riot casualties; the stiff upper lip; the steady decline of an Empire...

In order to preserve some sense of dignity on a sinking ship, much attention has to be paid to trivial pursuits.

Football ("Bring On The A'gies" screams a newspaper headline referring to the recent World Cup) and Cricket are two sports which rile up deep nationalistic feelings. The recent successful attempt by Richard Branson (Virgin Records king) to break the world record to cross the Atlantic was hailed here as "Britannia rules the waves again." The American museum who had possession of The Blue Riband trophy refused to surrender the trophy to Branson because the competition is held for ocean liners, not "little toy boats."

This kind of jingoism in the press isn't, of course, just particular to the English. The English, however, subscribe to the most pathetic, therefore the funniest Media maintained nationalism. Successful English films generally harp on about 'the good olde days': *Chariots of Fire* and the David Lean films for example, only address the era of 'tea-time' Englishness that only lives in the culture that England wants to promote overseas.



meet the housemartins

a buncha fun guys
or a buncha fungi?

Nobody under 25 wants to know about Churchill or Lord Nelson or the fucking Romans—they want immediate culture and take-away music.

Kids here like to be reminded of their drole status and the utter Englishness of suffering quietly for the rest of their lives, like in any other decent caste system. Bands like The Smiths and The Housemartins are making self-pity a national pastime!

The Smiths' *The Queen Is Dead* and The Housemartins' debut album *London O, Hull 4* were greeted with ecstatic reviews praising their wry and witty observations of '80s Britain. They were observant perhaps, but there were no conclusions, and no action taken. The music has been heard before—it's that wonderful English law that says "if it's old, it's still good," because it probably harkens back to a more invigorating time in music.

Such is the state of limey music at the moment. Tried and true formulae are winning out.

In fact, so retrospective are The Housemartins, they expect to be received in North America much the same way as Madness were... "wild and wacky Brits." But just thinking about dealing with American record companies "scars the hell" out of poor old Norman, the bass player.

"They want us for seven albums and a whole mess of money but we'd rather do a one-off album."

The smash hit single 'Happy Hour' from the album *London O Hull 4* has reached the top 5 over here and has made these lads reluctant heroes from the dismal city of Hull. 'Happy Hour' takes the piss out of the wine bar set, yet these are the people buying the bloody record.

"Ironic" is how Stan puts it,

who has just joined us. "Very ironic. Definitely ironic." We all agree it is indeed ironic.

Stan plays guitar and carries the weight of this deficiency around on his overburdened shoulders, like the prat he would appear to be. He gabs about politics at length, reminding me of some snotty liberal student who has just memorized his end of term exam paper. Hoo Ra. Our Stan is the kind of fellow you'd like deal a swift kick in the butt because he sticks his nose in everybody else's conversation. A typically wacky English yob—the kind you find throwing darts down the pub with the rest of the lads.

Our Stan says that the lyrics always poke fun at "the middle class, never the working class." Pitiful socialist dogma drama. So, comparisons are drawn with the Redskins, those baldies who profess to be politicians first and musicians second.

Stan: "We like The Redskins—great band; nice people—but if you like their music all you get is all this poitics. Whereas with us, if you like the music, the politics is there but not as heavy. We try to make people think for themselves. The Redskins are preaching only to the converted; we want to get a whole variety of different people and be a bit more subtle with the politics."

Glad to hear it.

The Housemartins are socialists; Stanley especially enjoys espousing the plight of the down trodden kids on the dole...

Well, here he is waxing lyrical on the horridness of Thatcher and the lost generation, when a fat wad of 10 pound notes drops out of his shorts.

What'cha got there, Stan?

"Oh, how very embarrassing"

Oh, how very English. Fucking hypocrite.

As rock critic Greil Marcus said, "The best popular artists create immediate links between people who might have nothing in common but a response to their work..."

If they've done nothing else in their five years as a band—and I'm prepared to argue they've done a helluva lot—REM have fostered a community of listeners and fans. Community—a social group whose members share common interests, characteristics, or have a common cultural and historical heritage.

The most extreme members are almost insanely loyal. David Welham and Georgina Falzarano, two schoolteachers from Winnipeg, followed REM for 15 dates last summer. This fall, they're taking a term off to follow REM (and see America) for a three-month tour if it's okay with the band. Caryn Rose, of Hoboken, puts out an REM fanzine called *Radio Free Europe*, and has followed the band as far as England. Tim and Mark from Cleveland caught 10 shows last year, and already know most of Mike Mills' hidden background counter-harmonies from the new album.

These people are not teenyboppers or groupies or hangers-on in the traditional sense; they're intelligent young adults who've found themselves tremendously moved by the band.

As Phil Dello aptly pointed out last issue, people tend to react to REM according to factors way beyond their music. I'm convinced the community of fans loves REM at least as much for their ethics as their music. They've always been friendly, unpretentious, and easy to hang out with. College radio and REM have always been mutually supportive; they refuse to play large stadiums, or become too concerned with record sales; they've always been able to laugh at themselves and the whole pop game.

This hasn't changed—yet—but *Lifes Rich Pageant* is sure to cause a fair degree of consternation in the community. To me, and probably most of the community, the album tops anything they've done, and all possible expectations I'd had for it. But that's just the music. The ethics are just beginning to enter the kingdom of Questionable.

I mean, this album, produced by Don Gehman is unashamedly slick and radio-friendly; IRS Records is pushing it unlike any previous REM offering, and have moved 300,000 units so far (predicting a million-seller); the boys actually agreed to do a promo tour. As Peter Buck says, they're "within a fingernail's width of being really big now." For REM novices, that's great news, and the fan community can hardly begrudge them a measure of success they've always deserved. But the signs are pointing to the sort of mainstream breakthrough that—for an exceptional band like REM—could spell Insupportable Contradiction.

"We do this because we like to write and play songs. Anything that furthers that is okay, but you've got to watch it. We worry about it. It seems you wake up one morning and realize you're a whore, or a phony, or you sold your ass a year ago and don't know it."

—Peter Buck, 1984

So many people want to interview us on tour, but we have so many other things to do that it's real difficult. Also, this is the first time that the record's come out before we've hit the road. This is the right time, for political reasons, to go and inject a little bit of fever into the radio people, 'cause right now it's make-or-break time for the single. Not that I care much, but the record company obviously does. I don't mind—I'll take the money.

—Peter Buck, '86, explaining why he agreed to a promo tour

It's IRS's job to sell records, so if they smell a hit then it's only logical for them to "work" the record. But as Buck wound his way from radio station to station—while Mike Mills did nine straight interviews back at the hotel—there were all sorts of little indications that from now, they'd have to "watch it" more than ever before.

Fuck you, I work too hard for this

It's 1:30 pm on interview day. Buck has already talked to *Graffiti*, *The Toronto Sun*, *Canadian Press*, and Vancouver's *Georgia Straight* for two and a half hours. IRS rep Paul Orescan is gathering him up in the lobby at the very time he's due for the next session, for CBC's *Nightlines*. We pile into Orescan's little red car and whip over to the Church Street studios.

Buck gives *Nightlines* some interesting stuff—typically, almost everything he says is valuable, even the indirect stuff. Asked about Art vs. rock 'n' roll, he says, "I love some of the whimsical, spur-of-the-moment stuff, but then you can go and read essays on the guy who wrote 'Louie Louie.' Rock 'n' roll should be fun. It's fine to enjoy it purely on a 'sound' level, as something you listen to while washing the dishes. You go to a U2 show, and they attract plenty of guys who are drunk, with Motorhead T-shirts on. But the stuff is there on a listening level, if you want it."

On *Pageant*: "It's our perception of America going wrong, kind of."

On success: "We always thought we'd be a specialized taste: Play local bars and earn a living. We never expected to be so big. We always feel we're in a very privileged position."

On Athens: "It's our home away from 'stardom.' I'm just the guy down the block. It's too self-deflating to ever fall prey to 'stardom.'"

Suddenly, the satellite transmission for the interview breaks down for a few minutes. On the phone, trying to link-up again, Buck says hello and gets a dial tone back. "That's the result I usually get," he says. "So much for being famous!" laughs the technical engineer. When it's over, Buck attempts a promo spot for the show, and bobbles it a few times. "This is even harder than smiling on command," he quips.

It's 2:00p.m. and we're back on schedule for a short lunch break. En route to the Spotted Dick, Orescan says, "This band has reached the turnaround stage, where the benefits of working all these years finally start to accrue." Buck says, "Yeah, sometimes it just gets to you. If you're being interviewed by some totally lame guy in the middle of nowhere, who knows nothing about the band, sometimes you just want to reach across the table, grab him, and say Fuck you, I work too hard for this!"

MAKE IT BIG

~

Buck mentions he's been Mr. Bachelor-on-the-loose lately, because he and his girlfriend of six years have broken up. "We were always under a strain," he says. "She was tired of living in my shadow. We're both kind of relieved about it. We were both really nutty people. You just can't have a girlfriend in this band, or really in any band that's a long term commitment." Then he mentions that Mojo Nixon spent a few days at his house "easing domestic tensions." I try not to lose my breakfast laughing.

At the Spotted Dick, the barman recognizes Buck. "Are you in REM?" Buck says yeah, I'm the guitar player. "I loved *Murmur*; that was a great album." Buck says, Have you heard the new one? "No." I think it's the best one we've ever done.

He's going to have to start going through a lot of this.

Buck barely touches the kebab he ordered, which arrived in record time, so he might make it to Q107 on time. He does somewhat better with his Double Diamond draft.

About 2:30, we hustle over to the Hudson Bay tower and beam up to the Mighty Q. I can't sit in on this one, but find out Buck's three choices for desert isle albums are *Exile on Main Street*, *Astral Weeks*, and the *Muddy Waters Box Set* ("I cheated,"

he smiles.) While I cool my hoofs in Q's waiting room, I ponder the thought of a new horde of REM listeners—the ones who get drunk and wear Motorhead T-shirts.

About 3:30, en route to CHUM-FM, Orescan explains to Buck how the station has yuppified, how they're going for a broad demographic, and how they're playing the new single 'Fall On Me' and really wanted the interview. I can't sit in on this one either, so I watch Orescan frantically making calls.

I ask him why no interview at CKLN today. He says if the whole band were here today, they'd head down to 'LN for a more casual, relaxed thing. As it stands, they have to focus on national stuff. I later find out this upcoming tour is the first time CKLN won't be 'presenting' REM in Toronto. IRS felt CFNY would be more effective. Still, CKLN have done more for REM than any station in this city, from the word go.

Brilliant work with Barbara Streisand

About 4:00 pm, en route to the hotel for a Winnipeg Sun interview, I ask Buck how the interviews are going. "Pretty good. People are asking good, intelligent question. They seem to have picked up on the themes. Since we've become a priority now, people seem to have done their homework more and really know about the band."

Orescan pops in a tape of the Northern Pikes, live from the Horseshoe, doing 'Jackie T.' and 'Dreamland.' I think how so many band have been influenced by REM in so many ways that to say a band "sounds like REM" without qualification is meaningless.

Back at the hotel, I find the interviewer is a fellow I met as the CASBYs; so he doesn't mind if I sit in on the interview. A clever interviewer, he opens by asking what the most commonly asked question was today. Then he asks what the most common response was. The question(s): Why Don Gehman? And why is the album so clear. The answers: "We work with Don Gehman because of his brilliant work with Barbara Striesand. Which is true, he did do a record with her. But we really just like his stuff. The clearness is because we're dealing more with what's happening in the outside world than the sort of personal stuff we usually do. If you're doing stuff about the world, you have to be clearer, make more rational connections with it."

Buck talks about taking 6-7 weeks to record this album, doing 12-hour days instead of 18, taking weekends off. He talks about getting hundreds of tapes from young independent bands, and says he listens to at least a little bit of every one: "I get hundreds, and they range from pretty terrible to really

good, but there's so many I just can't keep track. But I always listen to each one, at least a bit.

"Then there's people who want me to get 'em a record deal. Like, 'I'm getting a band together next week, but I've got some songs with me and my guitar, recorded on a hand-held monotape recorded here. Think you can get me a deal?' I don't think I could get Bob Dylan a deal in 1965!"

What'll happen when REM re-negotiates their contract after the next album? "We want to release more records, but we're sort of limited to one every seven months because they have to have three singles, and videos, touring etc. I'd like to put out a blues record, or something wierd that we cut really quickly. If we sell a million, we might get the freedom to do that."

"With re-negotiating, we'll get a higher royalty rate, get to do more fanzine records without hassle, and avoid current restrictions, like I'm not allowed to work on other peoples' records without permission from the record company, or to have my picture on 'em, whatever. There are power issues and money ones; we're much more concerned about the power ones. And we've never been in debt to the record company in America."

"Colossal!"

Earlier in the day, I asked Buck my own questions. Why did *Pageant* come with one of those obnoxious stickers that lists the three pick singles? "That must be for Canada, 'cause in England they wanted a sticker, and Michael came up with one that says, 'Colossal! Huge! Gigantic! Understated!' Michael handled that sticker, so don't ask me. In Japan, they stick weird pictures of us on the cover."

What about the possibly Insupportable Contradiction: You guys doing what you do because you want to, but the record company doing it for money?

"As things grow, things change. But it's like Led Zeppelin. You can't say that anything influenced them. They were just a bunch'a bozos, they did exactly what they felt like doing, and they sold 80 million records."

"The way we look at it is, if we sell a million, we can do whatever we want to. It's like Prince: He can get away with anything. A lot of his records might be crap, but it'll be accepted 'cause it's Prince, and that's fine. Not that we want to make crap, but when you get to that point, people will accept what you do. It'll be important, rather than just another record."

I read Buck a Greil Marcus quote, the essence of which is that a performer can grow away from his audience or cut himself off as he changes, or he can define himself in their terms and lose his identity and creativity.

"For us, there's the third choice of doing what you want to and educating your audience. You've got to take the people's expectations and build on them or tear them apart."

Epilogue: Buck and Mills go off in Orescan's car to CFNY for the final interview, after which they'll zip from Brampton to the airport and fly to Chicago for more of the same. I put on the radio to listen to the CFNY interview.

Earl Jive and Beverly Hills chat with the boys a bit, then introduce 'Begin the Begin,' which they spin at 45 rpm instead of 33. After a laugh, they introduce the original version of "Superman," by the Clique, for a "battle of the bands" thing. But they play the wrong side. Finally, they do the first verse of 'Superman,' then play the full REM version.

I don't blame them for technical screw-ups: Anyone can have a bad day. But later, Jive asks Buck, "So, what do you do in the band?"

I wish Peter Buck could have reached across the table and said "Fuck you!" because he really does work too hard for this.

■ By Howard Druckman



NEON ROME

On The Ovarian Trolley

Neon Rome are a band who...
(fill in the blank)

It's just ~~no~~ fucking use. This isn't rock journalism, this is an admission of failure. This isn't going to be much fun for either of us, but please bear with me.

This is an article about Neon Rome. They're a rock band. You can see them anytime you want, and could probably find as many things to say about them as I could.

This is an article. It contains portions of conversation, gathered from time spent with people who give up the better part of their lives for something called A Neon Rome. But you probably don't care about that, and I don't blame you.

These are facts. Mundane, obvious, and maybe even trivial, but it's been so long since someone said these things out loud that I feel obligated, no, bound to state them at least this once. I feel bound to be obvious because there are people who would allow my hatful of half-backed notions about Neon Rome to shape their perceptions of the band. This is not good. On the other hand, there are other people who feel strongly enough about the band already to ignore what I have to say. I'd be a liar if I said this didn't bother me, but this is music, after all, and writing about it is an absurd exercise that none of us here have quite come to grips with.

Onstage at the Bridge, Neal Arbick, the lead singer of A Neon Rome is lying between the monitors while the band behind him, Ken drums, Bernard keyboards, John bass, and Kevin guitar, execute a slight series of taps, screeches and drones. Neal arches his back, then rolls over to face the audience. Arbick sings in a high, nasal voice that resembles more than anything else a young boy. Minutes later the band has launched into a pounding, rigorous example of what we call rock. Arbick prances about, holding the mike at crotch level, tossing himself to the ground.

"The first time I ever saw Neal," Bernard tells me, "he played in Jesus' Mutants, right? I've never walked away hating a performer so much. I really disliked him! I thought, 'This guy is such a wanker!' I was really affected. I felt really bad."

Trying to say something about Neon Rome, you first find yourself encountering the Neal people find themselves being struck or turned off by Neal before giving any mind to what comes through the speakers. Neal's ability to elicit a strong reaction places him among the ranks of figures who, consciously or unconsciously, have influenced him.

Onstage at RPM, Neal has begun the second number by kicking his mike stand into the audience with a sly smirk. He begins taking off his jacket, a shabby leather thing with "New Heroin" painted on the back. Part of his routine for the rest of the set is a repeated gesture, a sinister

mime where he jabs an extended finger on his right hand into the fleshy, veinous part of his extended, rigid left arm.

My first attempt to interview Neal involved phoning his apartment and buzzing him several times from the lobby of his building, to no response, during the space of two hours. Sneaking through the security door, I find that he's been in his apartment the whole time. His cluttered, miniscule room is decorated with shards of mirrors, cut-outs of religious icons, and samples of the now infamous "New Heroin" poster. Scratched, worn Jimi Hendrix records, without sleeves or covers, lie on the floor. Arbick haltingly murmurs inanities, pausing to draw on his arm with a marker. He talks about problems in the band, and his hand shakes as he lights another joint tossed to him by a young girl who constantly rolls them. I begin to wonder if this couldn't have been stage-managed any better.

"Neal's really into experiencing things, you know what I mean?" Ken explains later. "What can I say, he's a weird dude, but he is a good person. Sometimes you say 'This guy is fucking nuts! What am I doing here?...You can't...I can't write off Neal and the things he does as being stupid. That's why I left the band in the first place 'cause I couldn't handle working with this fucking weirdo. Then after knowing him, he makes you learn things about being a... more real... human being."

Ken's voice trails off with the last few words and Bernard laughs.

"You say that with such conviction, Ken!"

"He's a weird dude, what can I say?"

Onstage at the Bridge, Neal is drawing himself up from a slump to full height while the band reaches a crescendo behind him. He sings some lines about a girl, then raises his voice to howl: "She's a Twentieth Century Fox-y Ladeehhh!"

Hearing that line, everything that's wrong with Neal Arbick, and by association, A Neon Rome, seems summed up as neatly as a Chinese puzzle:

CRITICAL BULLSHIT LINE

Neal Arbick is the willing product of hundreds of years of the tortured artist tradition. From Da Vinci through Beethoven, through Rimbaud through Celine through Pollock to a final, sexy and thoroughly accessible incarnation in Hendrix, Jones, and Morrison. It's a tradition that consumes young people whole, where alienation is a right, and concern for the world, except in the most general sense is a farce. It's unlikely to be proven and even less likely to cease. It's also endlessly fascinating.

I'm right there. I know I'm right.

"It's so easy to portray people like that as assholes," Ken says when I start throwing comparisons at him. "But there's a lot of this talk about guys like Syd Barrett, but maybe they're the truest forms of a human

being. Doing what they think is right as opposed to what the world thinks is right."

He's right. He's right, too.

"Neal's a nice guy, and a very dear friend," says Groovy Religion's Bill New. "But he's also mad as a hatter."

To be fair, Arbick's not as fucked up as he pretends to be. During a photo session, and before a gig at RPM, Neal was straight, and rather shy and withdrawn, seeking the company of band members and friends, hinting at an unexpected vulnerability.

□

Onstage at RPM, Neal is pleading with the audience near the end of a particularly tense set.

"Look, people, I want to know if you're getting off. Is anybody getting off? We're up here, and I'm sawing my nuts off to try to give you a good show, and I don't think you're getting off. Please, get off. Please, Please."

The band pummels into the next number, and Neal thrashes about the huge stage like a speed freak, tossing himself from mid-air to the ground repeatedly. The song ends in wails of feedback, and only Neal remains on stage, leaning out past the monitors as far as he can, flashing the audience the finger with both hands, screaming against the din; "Fuck You."

"There's an element with this

band that I believe no other band that I've seen in my life has had. It's an unknown, magical thing that's happening," Ken tells me.

"It's belief, really," Bernard says.

"It's like all five of us blindly believe in what we're doing. Sometimes it's ridiculous when I look at it as an outsider."

"You can write Neal off as anything you want, but he's taught all of us to express ourselves through our instruments. Maybe that's one of the reasons we're so capable of portraying a realistic mood."

As it stands, Neon Rome have as strong a relationship with the people who hate them as with the people who show up at gig after gig. Often it's the same people.

I find it impossible to fault the band musically. Every member shows an obvious ease and talent with their instrument that dismisses any accusation of amateurism and plagiarism. Their good nights make them without a doubt one of the best bands in the city. These good nights have prompted France's New Rose records to sign the band for an album due out by the end of this year.

The best art (I'll use that word, small-A, to cover anything that sits in our home or takes up our time, that doesn't open cans or pay the bills) gives its audience something that they didn't have in the first place, or destroys something that they didn't



John, Neil, Bernard —Rick McGinnis

Rick McGinnis trips

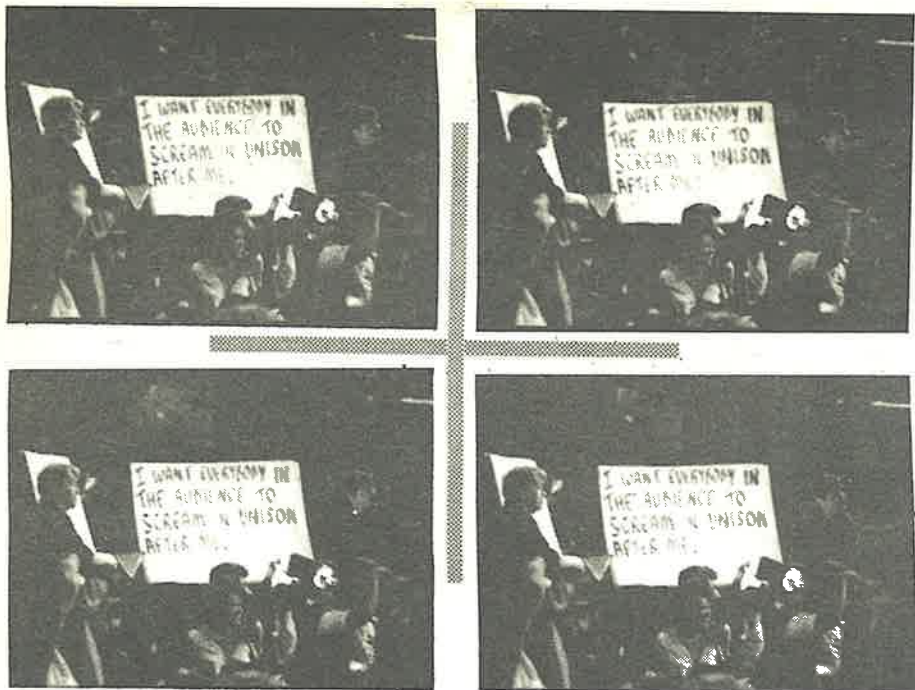
need in the first place. Often it doesn't give re-assurance or a warm, complacent feeling. Often it kicks away fragile foundations and leaves us hating it for the imposition on our lives. Sometimes, just sometimes, it gives us something marvellous and intangible, and we go away loving it.

"The most common feeling expressed by a lot of alternative bands is a down sort of thing," Ken tells me. "I think the highest thing that a band can do is express themselves to somebody and make them feel good. It's really hard, especially for an alternative band, because they're playing to a lot of people who've grown up with this sort of music—you see all these people in black and everything. The highest compliment is if you can play your music and make someone like that feel good."

At the Bridge, the band is finishing their set. Neal is standing in the middle of the empty dancefloor, his microphone still on the stage. The band are weaving up to the chorus of the song, Neal sings, his head tilted up to the ceiling. As the band brings the song down to a quiet, surprisingly gentle climax, we can hear the words Neal has been singing, simple and familiar, but at this moment, utterly powerful: "I am a human being."

The show ends, and people walk out on the street, some of them actually singing those words to themselves.

Don't listen to me. I've nothing to say. But I hope you paid attention anyway.



CASBY awards

hokey night in canada

by Dave MacIntosh



When the CASBY Awards (Canadian Artists Selected By You) first appeared, they were called the U-Know Awards, obviously a disparaging reference to the Establishment JUNO Awards. CFNY-FM, the tiny, once-eclectic Brampton radio station that now has the power to dominate the Pop perspective of much of Ontario, was just finding its feet, but came out strongly in favor of music the rest of the country found at best marginally amusing, at worst life-threatening.

But this weird, annoying new music, shackled to the awful 'New Wave' classification (remember when you could find Johnny Cougar (Mellencamp), AC/DC and Huey Lewis in the New Wave racks?), started to sell records and change lives, and Toronto had an excellent reputation as a stronghold of what was at that time thought to be a revolutionary music form.

We had one of the most respected and courageous promotions teams in the business in The Garys (probably the only men in town who can call Sting by his given name (Bart) without getting their heads cracked); a huge cult following for such luminaries as The B52s, XTC and The Ramones; and a private radio station with the guts and gall to do whatever they felt like doing with their sliver of airspace. Meanwhile, the critical line acknowledged that maybe Jackson Browne and Fleetwood Mac just weren't that solid a foundation on which to base your life's premise.

CFNY directly endorsed an overall attitude of...a kind of optimism. When the station started the pseudo-lampoon U-KNOW Awards in 1981, citing a slightly above-average bar band called Teenage Head as its (listenership's) choice of Best Group, the station was endorsing the Party Ethic desperately maintained by its 10,000 core audience of Punk Rock Elite.

A VERY ELABORATE, EXPENSIVE, MARKET RESEARCH SURVEY...

Just when CFNY was awarding statues to local bands peddling nostalgic excursions, its on-air staff were singing the praises of the new electronic pop music from Britain, and suddenly a new generation of spotty Yes and Genesis imitators were upon us, courtesy of CFNY. The station absolutely drooled over its involvement in the overnight success of such durable commodities as Duran Duran and Human League, and the manner in which the public took to the absolute saturation of this music in 1981-2 is wholly responsible for the bands CFNY is encouraging now, in 1986.

The CASBY Awards themselves have become a very important part of the Canadian pop business. There are some pop businessmen who actually believe the awards successfully monitor public opinion; thus, they function as a very elaborate, expensive market research survey...with a big party at the end of the job.

So: the initial impulse of the awards—acknowledging the 'untouchables' of the grand rock illusion—has mutated into this magnificent self-congratulatory gesture that supposedly justifies CFNY dumping most of its eggs into the one basket labelled New Wave Pop. In other words, CFNY could never in a million years pull a CHUM-FM stunt, drastically changing its programming to lure a more lucrative listenership, because CFNY is the

New Wave Pop station, pure and simple. Since its listenership is extremely loyal to that form of music, almost all of the suggestions ('not nominations,' the station insists, 'suggestions.') on this year's CASBY ballot are flawlessly New Wave Pop in nature.

The Canadian Artists Selected By You Awards should be renamed the Canadian New Wave Pop Artists Selected By You Awards, unless the Awards Committee revises their policies of inclusion and expands the ballot to include Folk, Jazz, Funk, Hardcore, Metal, you name it. Maybe even Canadian 'Artists' will have an opportunity to be Selected By You. Somehow I doubt it. 'Art' art takes too damn long to make, and the artists in this fable are dealing a slightly more disposable commodity.

The CASBY Awards Show is essentially a tidy, slick rock 'n roll pageant beamed across the country. A maximum of "80 per cent of Canadian households" had the opportunity of viewing the 1986 CASBYs (thanks to the "considerable financial support" of Official Sponsor Heinz Ketchup), and you can bet the statistical mass marvelled at the wit and wisdom of presenters Paul Shaffer and Carol Pope, not to mention the stirring lip-synch performances of Chalk Circle, Parachute Club, Dalbello with Rupert Hine, General Public, and Boys Don't Cry (now there's a band making 'the music of tomorrow').

There's no doubt at all that the awards are certifiably Big Business. Heinz laid out a lot of dough for their involvement in this award show, and I'm sure this company doesn't fuck around with half-assed promotional schemes. But one glance of their full page ad in the Official CASBY Program tells the whole story: the ad features a modestly miniscule graphic of the noble red bottle, and the huge helvetica slogan "TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN BECOMING A FAMOUS NAME, CONGRATULATIONS." Then, in much smaller print, "We know what you went through."

Brilliant! It's fame fuelling the desire for fame; money endorsing the quest for money. It's not the nature of big business to back losers, so they're putting their substantial bucks into sponsoring the glorious future of Canadian rock 'n roll...or New Wave Pop, whatever. I wonder how many plump, healthy tomatoes sacrificed their lives to give Bruce Cockburn the thrill of a lifetime: winning a 1986 CASBY award for best video.

I'm not mocking Heinz, because they actually place a lot of stock in this New Wave thing; what with their direct sponsorship of Perfect World's video, (phase two of their plan to infiltrate the hearts and minds of the Canadian music consumer with their *Heinz Music Video Awards*—these are not awards of mere statues, but cold hard cash). They believe the CASBYs are "the forum for awarding national recognition to up and coming artists."

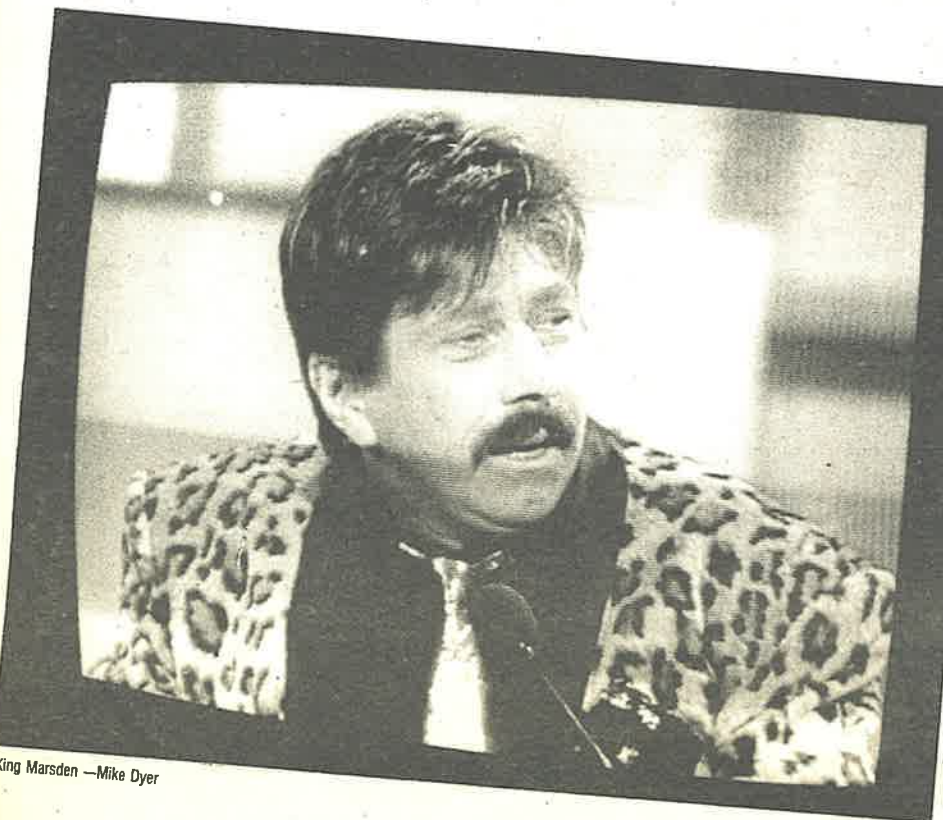
PROFOUND MOVEMENTS, BUT NO 'ELEMENTAL POSTERIORS'

Are the good folks at Heinz Ketchup being fooled? Not at all. The CASBYs are unsurpassed at drawing a crowd around some previously unheard of bands and individuals.

But the show itself is not actually very good. Hundreds of young persons (who have had the benefit of clean living and a decent education, and who therefore should know better) cheer as a band is elected as Group Of The Year on the strength of one measly single—and a brace of club gigs these children were unable to attend by virtue of their inability to produce



Brigitte Cavanagh



King Marsden —Mike Dyer

identification. Eighty per cent of Canadian households turn to their offspring and ask, "Images in who?" In a charismatic speech, the lead singer mumbles "Thank you for this award." Bravo! Eighty percent of Canadian households are profoundly moved.

At this point, British band General Public perform the World Premiere of the vocal parts of their brand new single, which bears a striking resemblance to the Parachute Club's World Premiere of their own brand new vocal part performed just minutes previously. The audience wonders: "who's that cardboard cut-out guy on stage?" The 70 percent of Canadian households that are still watching reply: "Who the fuck cares? Why is this lame British band getting three minutes of prime ketchup time, when Halifax sensations The Elemental Posteriors are denied their due reward?"

Then we're treated to an absorbing, light-hearted exchange between Paul Shaffer (an actor) and Eugene Levy (a funny actor), and yes, I've had a few beers and it's all very amusing but *what has it got in common with rock 'n roll*, and the maverick spirit confiscated from the original CFNY-FM?

In a press release from CBC-TV, Program Director Alex Frame reveals that "in 1985 the CASBY Awards turned out to be one of the biggest entertainment events, as well as one of the best television shows on air last season." It's a show; an entertainment event. CBC is more than pleased to add the CASBYs to their schedule of fine television broadcasting because "it fits in well with our late-night strategy of 'Good Rockin' Tonight'."

I'll bet it does!

The only thing that distinguishes the CASBY Awards show from the JUNO Awards show is the names, the manner of attire, and the catering company, so you have to wonder what the JUNO people are thinking. I asked Peter Steinmetz, president of the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS; the governing body of the JUNO Award Committee) about his ideas on the CASBYs.

"I'm on record as supporting what they were; a Toronto-based awards program for emerging talent, which is consistent with what CARAS believes in. We support the Canadian 'star system' at every level. We're trying to build stars in this country, and we would never deny the artists that opportunity for exposure. The CASBYs started out as a new music, radio station promotion, and I think they have a problem of focus. I vigorously oppose a competing music awards system that is trying to reach a national TV audience through a gala awards show."

Were the U-Knows trying to dismantle that 'star system' or create a new one of their own?

"Neither. I think when they started the U-Knows, they observed—I think accurately—that the Academy and the JUNOs were vulnerable. They were becoming less meaningful to the marketplace. I think what David Marsden recognized at that point was an excellent opportunity to test our sense of humour. Everybody had a good laugh at our expense, and it was a brilliant promotion. But the TV audience want stars, and the CASBY audience will diminish or increase in direct proportion to the level of major recording stars they have on the show."

They bypass that by roping in TV and Film stars.

"They're trying to put on a nationally televised variety show. I wish that they would stop trying to present it as an awards show. We'll end up with a fragmented awards system in this country."

What can be done?

"Nothing. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery. The CASBYs are imitating the JUNOs increasingly as each year goes by."

The major difference being that the CASBYs are awarded by public decree.

"That's a very narrow philosophical point. It's an easy sell to the public. We get the public vote, in a different way. The people who are nominated for JUNO awards end up being the best sellers. That is a vote from the public, who have voted with their money."

I'll buy that.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

The big night. Boy, you could smell the anticipation in the air, let me tell ya'. Keeping us press hacks happy ten miles from our favorite watering holes on a Friday night is no small achievement: Media creatures want plenty of food, beer, respect, like-minded company, and mingling room. Despite the efforts of Publicist Joanne Smale and her small, dedicated staff, our mingling was to be done in the bands' food tent after an act of God (He too was pissed off at Skinny Puppy's virtual exclusion) that not even Marsden could negotiate, rendered the majestic media tent unfit for vermin, let alone reporters.

Let's see if I can remember any interesting 'Press' anecdotes...nope. It seems all the action took place in the Stars' tent, where Breeding Ground's John Shireff and Nash The Slash planned their first cemetery picnic excursion, and members of Images In Vogue traded grooming tips with The Box, and people kept saying to Martha Johnson, "You look great, but your boy looks a little pale around the gills." You shoulda' been there!

A disgruntled Gary Topp had few good words on the subject of the night's festivities. "Everything about the TV show sucked."

Promoter Topp is a stalwart supporter of the more whimsical and innovative local music, and one of a handful of Music Business people who does not refer to the clusters of music making individuals as 'Acts,' or the more condescending term, 'Talent.' He looked typically forlorn after the show.

"It might as well have been a kitty litter commercial. It's like the Jackie Gleason show for the alternative. It's not even alternative anymore. What is alternative? 'I Wanna Be A Cowboy?' I don't like the whole 'glitz' of it."

But that's the whole point: it has to be 'glitzy' to be accepted by the public.

"CFNY have good intentions, but they're rewarding themselves. CBC and CFNY have nothing in common, so when CBC is involved it turns out to be a CBC variety show, and it's so phoney!"

That's entertainment, Gary!

What of the awards themselves: What exactly is being honored? It's my belief that CFNY (and their listenership) rewards and encourages not musical ideas and innovation, but *traits*; not bands who breach the frontiers of contemporary tolerance, but businessmen/musicians who display the correct *tendencies*. This is why Canada will never produce a band as good as The Doors or The Jesus And Mary Chain.

The entire process has absolutely fuck all to do with 'encouraging our brave young alternative musicians,' as anyone with eyes and ears can plainly see. If these CASBY awards were anything other than a tribute to the triumph of technological subterfuge, then I'd like to have my error of judgment pointed out. Show me! Show me exactly what is 'alternative' about the crop of talented young individuals that CASBY '86 honoured.

C'mon, what promise have Chalk Circle shown, God love 'em, other than the possibility that they might make several more innocuous pop records like *The Great Lake* and grow up into big, strong opportunists like Parachute Club someday? Wait: We forget that truly alternative music was designed to circumnavigate the traditional methods of appraisal, and should by definition be an *alternative* to something: the CASBY Awards, for instance.

Let's face it; as our friend from CARAS pointed out, the CASBYs are showing classic signs of courting the establishment, and are becoming a junior-JUNOs, as opposed to an antidote to that monumentally tedious exercise in Industry back-patting. At best, they can only remind us, with their overt Toronto bias, just how devastatingly boring Canadian music is right now. Don't tell me that people as wholly insignificant as Michel Lemieux, The Box, Images In Vogue, Luba et al rank among the vanguard of Determined Youth, whose Spirit and Vision will lead us to another Golden Era of Pop Music based on their Strength of Purpose and their access to a Fairlight. Fucking hell, it's pathetic!

Of course, I'm merely using the CASBYs as a whipping post for the entire Rock & Pop Music Industry, but the awards do actually represent the severe shortcomings of the Industry as a (w)hole. *Everybody* I spoke to alluded to these shortcomings and the CASBYs' role in perpetuating the crippling mediocrity. But nobody has actually said "This is *shit*; it's an insult to the standard of excellence Canada has set in the past, and CFNY and the CASBY committee are deluding themselves, and whatever goddamn percentage of Canadian households, if they believe that a significant majority of music fans are satisfied with these people as our country's contribution to the world of pop music culture." Nobody said that. Not to me, anyway.

But if these statistics prove correct, and these people are in fact the Canadian Artists Selected By Divine Intervention, then I'll profusely apologize to all concerned, lay down this angry pen, and decline any further invitation to attend the next circus. I'll just sit here and rot in my fool's paradise. Or maybe I'll migrate to Luxembourg...I hear they've got a great alternative music scene.



c8k8!1n

A L B U M S

1. VARIOUS ARTISTS You Bet We've Got Something... —Cathexis
2. DREAM SYNDICATE Out Of The Grey —Big Time/PolyGram
3. NICK CAVE Kicking Against The Pricks —Mute
4. KRONOS QUARTET Kronos Quartet —Nonesuch/WEA
5. REM Lifes Rich Pageant —IRS/MCA
6. OF TANZ VICTIMS Haunting The Empire —Bunker O.T.V.
7. CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN II & III —Pitch a Tent/Rough Trade (U.S.)
8. LEON REDBONE Red To Blue —August
9. LEE PERRY Battle of Armagideon —Trojan
10. MANTECA No Heroes —Duke St./WEA

S I N G L E S

1. L'ETRANGER Sticks & Stones —L'ETRANGER
2. SHOCK CULTURE —Gryphon
3. RYTHM TWINS Freedom —RT Music/Freelance
4. MINAMILIST Self Discussed (cass) —Independent
5. KILLING JOKE Adorations —E.G./Virgin

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Psychedelic Furs CNE

When I got to my seat at the Grandstand, there was no sign of the Blow Monkeys, so no review here for them. It was still broad daylight when Simply Red took to the stage unannounced, but the sun failed to dissuade these sad, young sentimentalists from crying all over the stage. Of course, when it got darker, the stage lights warmed them up and Wimpily Red got blood simple. They got harder. They played Wham better than Wham, but with lyrics of a more constructive philosophy—"Baby, I'm your conscience" as opposed to "man."

Equally surprising was the audience; a more chipper lot you'll not see, with all their gorgeous suntanned legs, standing up and applauding. I had figured on Simply Red having about as much appeal to Furs' fans as a shave. Yet so many were these red simpletons that I was forced to stop writing nasty notes; they were reading over my shoulder.

The guy next to me knew all of the words to their songs. He kept trying to keep pace but was lost on the high notes. I, on the other hand, kept hoping he didn't know the Furs' lyrics. Moreover, he kept time like a sand clock; which made his enthusiastic hand smacking equally annoying. There were benefits of course: the guy I was with kept clapping as well and this gave me many opportunities to grab handfuls of his karmelated korn.

The Furs came on with 'Heartbeat', Richard Butler dressed to the teeth; a hybrid of Billy Idol and Wayne Newton, with loathesome winged shoulders and four tons of glitterstuds. It took a good seven songs before my notes expressed enthusiasm. Not at all a strong start. More like a characterless power surge, a fifteen minute flex that dispatched 'Here Come Cowboys', 'Alice's House', and horrors, 'Heaven', with the thoughtlessness of "test one two three."

Just as well, since it took that long for Butler to realize that the audience wanted to love him, and that it was safe to be a little less intense and a lot more interesting. 'Sister Europe' was the turning point: drums pounding at right angles to Butler's fey posturing, with blasts of cold light for covering fire. This was not a lonewolf fuck machine on stage; Butler isn't that obvious. What makes this band so good is what makes them hard to define (the sign of a strong act). I think they are brilliant satirists. 'President Gas', for instance, is an excellent song in its own right. But listen to the lyrics, delivered in that mocking monotone, and the conspiratorially marshall clip of the instruments, and you've got some powerful social commentary. 'President Gas' was the last song, and I've never been more ready for an encore.

'Pretty In Pink' brought them back, and all these girls who looked frighteningly like Molly Ringwald stood and cheered. If they only knew just how sleazy the song 'Pretty In Pink' is: an unfortunate girl gets pushed around her bedroom by an army of anonymous men. Meanwhile, on screen, Molly Ringwald can't pay someone to cop a feel. But that's the way the movies work (as if you didn't already know).

Lines like "her lovers walk through in their coats," count for nothing; Mollywood saw the Simple Minds/Breakfast Club smash, and made it work again. The Furs are happy, the studios are delirious, Molly gets her third pink Thunderbird and we have to cope with youngsters talking about the 'new' Furs single—which was a lousy remake of the great 'Pink.' But after I managed to broach the front stage area, as they finished the night with the first album's highlight 'India,' I realized this was more than just a band before me.

I read somewhere that Simply Red would blow the Furs offstage. I don't know much about blowing monkeys, but if anyone did some blowing it was the guy who wrote that article. He really blew it.

Denis Seguin

LIVE!

Van Halen, BTO, Loverboy CNE

Bachman Turner Overweight rocked hard as openers, crunching out their old hits as they blimped around stage, just takin' care of business. Yes, they're very fat. Randy Bachman rested his axe on his gut so he could munch caramel corn with both hands. But they did lay down some truly great chunky riffs.

Loverboy ate shit.

As the sun went down and the full moon rose, Van Halen came on and did a sound check that blew away most acts' encores. There's only one thing to understand about Halen After Dave: You can't take your eyes off Eddie. Ever. Sammy Hagar was predictably pathetic—"Ya, are we fuckin' partyin' or what, Toronto?" He tried to sell the sad \$150 by yelling the album title every ten seconds or so. He climbed the rigging and yelped 100 feet above stage: Try falling if you're really into crowd pleasing. Sam. Alex Van Halen's drum was a yawn. Michael Anthony's bass solo was the only pleasant surprise of the band that backs up...Eddie.

Eddie is it. The records don't even hint at what he can do. He doesn't just finger-tap, dive-bomb, and play seven billion notes a bar. He does it all at once with enormous ease and joy. You can't imagine how comfortable he looks with a guitar, creating mind-melting runs as he grins goofily and jumps about. He loves playing. Filling CNE Stadium with his "warm, brown sound," the searing sonic bliss shone in Eddie's face, most of all when Sammy shut up. His ten-minute solo was awesome beyond words. Only Hendrix has done more with an electric guitar. So the mall rats headed home in their \$18 Van Halen Kicks Ass shirts, their babes in tow in their purple spandex skin and transparent tops. It's so difficult to tastefully wear more make-up than clothes. So why be tasteful? They were all satisfied. If that's not perfect, Halen closed with 'Rock And Roll,' Eddie all over the sucker. Halen wailin' Zep-pelin as fireworks scream overhead. Suburbia comes to urbia. And isn't that what the Ex is all about?

Kyle 'Kick-ass' Swanson

Big Country

Kingswood Music Theatre

Their new album was a disappointment, so I wasn't considering going to the concert.

However, I had a very pleasant, brief interview with drummer Mark Brzezicki the afternoon of the show. Brzezicki seemed very intense about the vibe in the band, how loose they were onstage, how good it had felt right from the start. He spoke of Stuart Adamson in the same breath as Pete Townshend, on whose records the drummer has played. Brzezicki met Adamson while playing with Tony Butler and Pete's brother Simon Townshend in the band On The Air. Apparently it clicked from the first note, so they gave it a go.

Big Country once played a gig in Hawaii on the beach; Brzezicki drummed in swim trunks, then walked into the Pacific after their encores. On the other hand, Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother* is his favorite album. "The drumming on that record is the best. Every drummer must give it a listen. It's absolutely incredible." Brzezicki seemed sincere and purposeful. What the hell, I thought. Go.



The show was splendid. Adamson's voice was clear and true, the dual guitar attack crisp and ringing. There were some fine staging effects, such as the backlighting of the castle tapestry behind the band. Most importantly, Big Country rocked. They scrambled around stage, duckwalking and grinning widely.

The crowd of 3,500 was loud at Kingswood: they sang along on the choruses and knocked over chairs, to the anguish of the power-tripping security guards. Big Country strikes the same anthemic chord as U2 and the Alarm, and their fans share the same fervour. The band got off big on the audience response, playing to every spectator.

Afterwards, Brzezicki was aglow with energy. he couldn't stop smiling, said the crowd was brilliant. It was obvious he wished he was still on stage. Earlier he'd claimed, "Every night when I play I still get shivers down my spine." I believe it.

Kyle Swanson

Whitenoise
Bambo

I'm convinced: Monday nights are the best for live jazz in T.O. Maybe it's because the bands are rested up from weekends of excess, or maybe it's because the gigs are more casual. Monday Night Jazz is good enough to deserve its own tradition, like Monday Night Football. One Monday night I caught the wailin' Shuffle Demons at Lee's Palace, with every table occupied and the dancefloor jammed.

This time, it was Whitenoise at the BamBoo. As JazzMeister Tim Powis insisted, they were smokin'! White noise leader Bill Grove cuts a charismatically cynical figure onstage. All bizarre contortions and pop-eye antics, Grove specializes in Wry with a Twist: He spews forth an infinity of conversational clichés, letting you know by tone of voice just how stupid or meaningless they are. He confronts the commonplace—mercilessly. As such, he's a captivating frontman who

reminds me of John Lydon, though his chant/rap falls somewhere on a line between David-Byrne-play and Run-DMC-monotonics. The group's most obvious reference point is Ornette Coleman's Prime Time Band, but Whitenoise get way funkier than that. The key is in the rhythmic foundations. Bryant Didier is the best (i.e. my favorite) bass player in the city—fast, clean, propulsive, and an inspirational improviser. Glenn Milchem may come

off as a bit dramatic, but he's easily the loudest, strongest, kickass-powerhouse drummer in town. As a rhythm section, they're unbeatable. On this particular eve, all you had to do was hear 'Let's Wreck the Discotheque' to catch my drift. When they kicked in from the line "I'm in too deep" to the chorus, you knew the floor had good reason to shake. This particular night, Howie Moscovitch seemed to fall into Heavy Metalisms, which was just fine by me,

pal. Between his pedals and the whammy bar, he did a credible elephant screech from time to time and effects on 'Whitemares', pretty accurately evoked that dream-like state of fear. Guitarist Ross Halpin played the straighter counterbalance. On sax, Grove is every bit as good an improviser as Coleman, and much more rhythmic. If you like to dance and you haven't seen Whitenoise yet, I feel for you.

Howard Druckman

Kurt Swinghammer
Music Gallery

As Kurt Swinghammer pointed out, this solo performance was something of a historical milestone—he claimed it was the first time anybody had sung a Burt Bacharach song at the Music Gallery, "home of the avant garde."

And when Kurt sings Burt, he does it brilliantly. Accompanying himself on a plugged-in acoustic guitar decorated much like the Shuffle Demons' *Streetniks* album cover (which Swinghammer designed), he sang a lengthy medley of the maestro's hits: 'Alty,' 'Do You Know the Way to San Jose?' 'Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head,' 'Walk On By,' and the highlight, 'What's New Pussycat?'

Swinghammer, who plays guitar with Vital Sines and used to play bass with the Lawn, knows his instrument. Those Bacharach songs, and many of Swinghammer's originals, have fancy changes in them that would leave the run of rock guitarists choking on their barre-chords. But this was no mere night out with a man and his guitar. The performance, entitled "Chemistry," also included costume changes, slides, taped back-up music, Kurt's nephew's singing debut (on tape) and Kurt himself singing the evening's TV Guide listings ("this is what you could be doing tonight"), while adding accents to a steady beat-box rhythm on a little tom-tom hooked up to a synthesizer.

All this was designed to demonstrate what a versatile, easy-going and entertaining fellow Der Swinghammer is, rather than presenting a conceptually unified piece of "performance art." Of particular interest was a tape of Crosby Stills and Nash's "My House," with slides of drawings by Swinghammer which implied "everything is easy 'cuz of you" because "you" killed those "two cats in the yard," that made life so hard. This had never occurred to me before, and Swinghammer's novel (and plausible) interpretation has forced me to evaluate the entire CSN&Y oeuvre to form a new perspective. Nah, they're still wimpy after all these years.

Tim Powis



Swinghammer—M. D'Amico

Stan Ridgway
R.P.M.

Stan casually spun his grimly humorous tales under the coloured lights, punctuating them with smoke from his cigarette. His rumpled black jeans, jacket, and cowboy boots told their own story. The precision five-piece band churned out a thick, pulsating backdrop for his many characters. Losers who just won't quit, they assumed life in the full house and in the band itself.

Ridgway was in flesh as on vinyl: wry, cynical, gripping, empathetic. "This one's for all you pseudo-intellectuals out there. That means all of you." He knows.

Most of The Big Heat was retold, along with a few Voodoo tunes, and a superb 'Don't Box Me In' from the Rumblefish soundtrack. 'Lost Weekend' was equally outstanding. It all was. Ridgway is the David Byrne of the American West; his stories are so bizarre, they could only be about you or me.

The third encore wound down. Who else would encore with a ditty from Bertold Brecht's 'Threepenny Opera'? Stan told the cheering throng, "This is my band. They work for me. Now they're gonna stop." He turned. "Okay, stop." They didn't. "Stop!" He ran around, frantically waving his arms. "Stop! Stop! You're all fired!" They played on.

We're all just characters in a Stan Ridgway song. Including Stan.

Kyle Swanson

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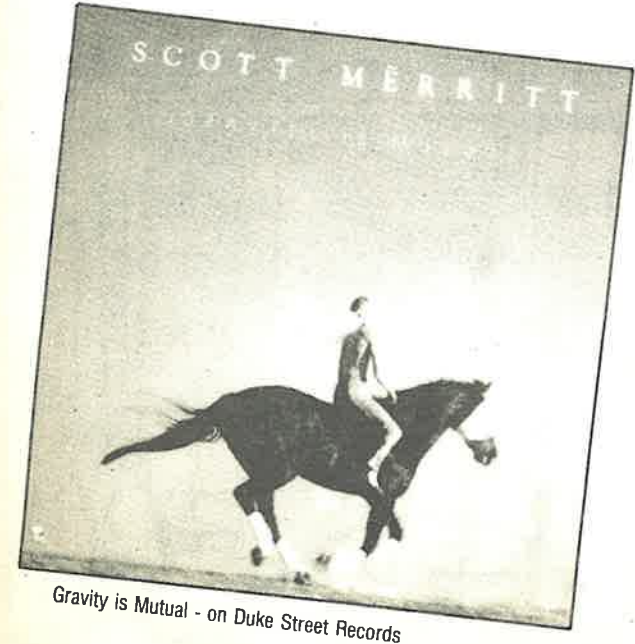
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Canadian Countdown

Scott Merritt: at Number One this month is *Gravity Is Mutual*, the third engaging, enigmatic album from this Toronto singer/musician. This one's on Duke Street Records, and the favorite track is "Raise a Ship For the Benefit." (WEA)
54.40: The highly rated Vancouver band's first major label effort features the classic pop hit single, "Baby Ran." (WEA)
Breeding Ground: singer John Shireff's debut with Toronto singer Molly Johnson on the psuedo-gospel song "Happy Now I Know" is the favorite track on *Tales Of Adventure*. (Fringe)
Shadowy Men On A Shadowy Planet: the top 7" single on our chart, *Wow Hiss Flutter* features 4 instrumental surf-twang tracks from this mysterious Toronto band. (JetPack)
Change Of Heart: *50 Ft. Up* is the excellent debut from this young Toronto band, featuring up-beat rock in tandem with profound surrealism. (Primitive)
Shuffle Demons: Wild, Crazy Bop for the *Streetnik* in everyone, their debut is a sure-fire campus hit. (Stubby)
Look People: the master satirists from Toronto (via Switzerland) are consistent favorites with their hilarious mutant rock 'n roll. (AMOK)
Dayglo Abortions: Loud, provocative, loud, rude, loud, and loud, this is the top new add on the chart. (Fringe).
Chris Houston: "Baby Jesus" continues to score big with strong Western support for his evocative tales of the downtrodden. (Zulu)
Euthanasia: new on the chart is *Living Heck*, the rough and ready debut LP from this Alberta band. (Rubber)



SCOTT MERRITT

Scott Merritt's initial project for Duke Street Records, *Gravity Is Mutual*, followed the release of two independent records on his own label. *Gravity* has been described as "a brilliant collection of humorous and humane tone poems", and the *Toronto Star*'s Greg Quill called his music "dense and personal, but always provocative." Live, Merritt's intriguing, quirky stage presence is a revelation for new audiences.

Scott Merritt has been a member of CAPAC for many years; the songs on *Gravity Is Mutual* are administered by Merritt's CAPAC publishing companies, Red Sky Music and Little Jona Music.

If you—or people you know—write, perform, or record original music, you should know about CAPAC. Finding out more about earning royalties is easy; you can start by calling Roy Windhager at (416) 924-4427 or Richard Flohil at (416) 925-5138.

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CAMPUS COUNTDOWN

THE WEB Alternative Radio Top 60 information is based on playlists from reporting canadian Campus radio stations. Statistics are compiled from point totals tabulated on playlist positions of artists, then multiplied by station classification factor

Sept 4th	2 wks ago	4 wks ago	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL	PEAK	WEEKS ON
1	2	8	SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS	Gun Shy	—WEA	1	8
2	37	-	VELVET UNDERGROUND	Another View	—Polygram	2	2
3	1	3	SCOTT MERRITT	Gravity Is Mutual	—Duke St.	1	8
4	14	50	JAZZ BUTCHER	Bloody Nonsense	—Polygram	4	4
5	5	12	54-40	54-40	—WEA	5	6
6	56	-	GUADALCANAL DIARY	Jamboree	—CBS	6	2
7	3	10	SMITHS	The Queen Is Dead	—WEA	3	4
8	7	33	MOJO NIXON/SKID ROPER	Frenzy	—Enigma	7	6
9	8	1	BREEDING GROUND	Tales of Adventure	—Fringe	1	12
10	11	11	BUTTHOLE SURFERS	Rembrandt Pussyhorse	—Touch & Go	10	10
11	4	5	SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET	Wow Flutter Hiss '86	—Jet Pac	4	10
12	9	13	RAMONES	Animal Boy	—WEA	9	10
13	13	28	CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN	II & III	—Rough Trade	13	8
14	10	6	PETER GABRIEL	So	—WEA	4	10
15	16	2	CHANGE OF HEART	50ft Up	—Primitive	2	12
16	15	14	BIG BLACK	Atomizer	—Pollution	13	8
17	19	54	SHUFFLE DEMONS	Streetniks	—Stubby	17	6
18	22	17	LOOK PEOPLE	Stop Making Cheese	—Pollution	10	8
19	30	-	DOGMATICS	Everybody Does It	—Homestead	19	2
20	32	-	FEELIES	The Good Earth	—Twin Tone	20	2
21	24	7	SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES	TinderBox	—Polygram	4	10
22	12	9	THE POGUES	Poguetry in Motion	—Stiff/WEA	7	12
23	25	-	DAY-GLO ABORTIONS	Day-Glo Abortions	—Fringe	23	2
24	17	4	CHRIS HOUSTON	Hate Filled Man	—Zulu	2	10
25	21	25	SONIC YOUTH	The World By Storm	—Abstract	21	8
26	-	-	REM	Life's Rich Pagent	—IRS/MCA	26	-
27	29	55	THAT PETROL EMOTION	Manic Pop Thrill	—Demon	27	8
28	6	19	SEVERED HEADS	Come Visit the Big Biggot	—Nettwerk	6	6
29	-	-	OF TANZ VICTIMS	Haunting The Empire	—Bunker O.T.V.	29	-
30	20	16	WOLFGANG PRESS	The Legendary Wolfgang Press	—Polygram	16	12
31	48	-	EUTHANASIA	Living Heck	—Rubber	31	2
32	18	21	SCREAMING BAMBOO	Break These Chains	—Dad's Favorite Discs	18	10
33	31	45	YOUNG LIONS	Welcome to the Freak Show	—Yodel Gems	31	4
34	33	-	MESSENJAH	Night Rider	—Version	33	2
35	26	52	CHRIS & COSEY	Take Five	—Nettwerk	26	4
36	34	-	BEAT FARMERS	Van Go	—MCA	34	2
37	52	-	PETER CASE	Peter Case	—WEA	37	2
38	-	-	UB40	Rat in the Kitchen	—Virgin/AM	38	-
39	38	20	LOU REED	Mistrial	—RCA	4	12
40	-	-	BOB DYLAN	Knocked Out Loaded	—CBS	40	-
41	-	23	MIND ALTERING DEVICES	To Touch the Face of God	—Transmission	23	-
42	-	-	VAN MORRISON	No Guru, No Teacher	—Polygram	42	-
43	-	-	AMAKUDARI	Amakudari	—Shaman	43	-
44	-	-	LOUNGE LIZARDS	Big Heart	—Island	44	-
45	50	29	FUZZTONES	Lysergic Eminations	—Enigma	21	10
46	-	-	BILL NELSON	On a Blue Wing	—Portrait/CBS	46	-
47	-	-	HAUF HUMAN	Eighty Six	—Graven Image	47	-
48	49	40	LAURIE ANDERSON	Home of the Brave	—WEA	3	14
49	51	-	STEVE WINWOOD	Back in the High Life	—WEA	49	2
50	-	-	KIM MITCHELL	Shakin Like a Human Being	—Alert	50	-
51	-	-	HELIOS CREED	X-Rated Fairy Tales	—Subterranean	51	-
52	57	-	BOLERA LAVA	Move A Groove	—Lava Rock	52	-
53	-	-	RUN DMC	Raising Hell	—Polygram	53	-
54	58	-	WIPERS	Land of the Lost	—Enigma	54	-
55	-	-	PETE SHELLEY	Heaven and the Sea	—Verigo	55	-
56	27	38	NILS	Nils	—Seigfried	27	6
57	-	-	L'ETRANGER	Sticks and Stones	—L'Etranger	57	-
58	42	37	THE POGUES	Rum, Sodomy & The Lash	—MCA	30	6
59	60	26	DAVE HOWARD SINGERS	Good Night Karl Malden	—Grip	26	8
60	36	51	HASIL ADKINS	Hazes House Party	—Norton	36	6

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54-40

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HAPPENINGS

Whining Out in Vancouver

Dreams do come true. So, alas, do nightmares. Here in Lotusland, our estimable leaders (the very cute and illiterate SoCreds) had themselves a little election. Our former emperor, the ever magnificent **B. Bennet II** needed a permanent vacation, thereupon to contemplate his roseate complexion, and therefore it behooved our rulers to choose a new ascendent to the golden throne of Deficitland. So, for the last month or thereabouts, Dr. Fishbreath made many an amusing comment to the effect that they will choose the most moronic candidate, the biggest peabrain of the lot, namely that ole **Mr. Bill Van Der Zalm**. We're talking about the same Mr. Bill who, while Minister of Human Resources, was overheard (by several network television cameras) saying instead of welfare and such, he would just as soon give the recipients thereof a **SHOVEL**, ha ha. The same Mr. Bill also was heard referring to French people as "a buncha' frogs" (again, well-

documented), and sued a newspaper cartoonist for drawing an uncomplimentary cartoon of him. After which he resigned, or was asked to. Who knows.


Anyway, Dr. F. has been amusing her friends with the aforementioned tales, and her most sincere hopes that the Socreds choose themselves him, the most representational of candidates, as the new Premier. All her friends laughed long and derisively at what they presumed to be a most improbable scenario. But we know better now, don't we? On election night, Dr. F. was rolling on the floor with glee, because the good doctor knows the worst always come true, which is a very comforting thought. Who the fuck likes surprises?

Alright now. Beyond comedy. Dr. Fishbreath has finally met her personal god. All jokes aside, she had the fortune to attend a performance of musician/artist extraordinaire **Elliott Sharp** from New York (of course), who was giving an impromptu show at the Pitt International Gallery. And as

the evening wore on, Dr. F. found herself melting into a puddle on the floor, and her most fervent wish was to lick Mr. Sharp's army boots, or at least give up all her worldly possessions and beg to be allowed to carry his battered instruments. Because, gentle readers, Dr. F. was floored by the simple fact that for the first time in her long and miserable life she was face to face with a great living artist.

She had never heard music like this, which grabbed her guts and her mind and twisted it all together and drop kicked it around the world, nay, the universe, I mean **THIS WAS INSPIRATIONAL!** And it was loud! No 'noodling' here. And it was **BEAUTIFUL**. And Dr. F. ran to buy his latest record. Even though she does not own a stereo. And on 'down'

DRESS



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Tom Anselmi

days, Dr. F. gazes upon this record with mute adoration. Screw pop music. (*I'll say!*—Ed.)

At this moment Dr. F. is languishing in Montreal, as she badly needed a vacation from doing nothing. And bitching. In Vancouver. So, Sunday past, she dragged herself down to the Cafe Campus here to see **Slow**, the bad boys who managed to get the whole **Exploit Independent Bands Festival** cancelled by creating a riot. (For this, Dr. F. has a very soft spot for them in the excuse she has for a heart). Unfortunately, the soundperson at the Campus possessed ears of lead and in the middle of their set, having decided that suffering did not become her, she slid sidled slowly to the door and out and away. Too bad. She actually likes the youthful fervor of this band. But the guitars sounded like a broken blender, the bass murmured in the background, the high end in the singer's voice took the skin off her face, and the drums sounded like the pitter patter of gentle rain on cardboard boxes. It was horrid. All bands should tour with soundpersons; that is the lesson learned from this.

Well, that is all this month from Billworld (also a bit from Montreal). Next month over to the astute comments of the venerable Shaman, who is so venerable that last month he totally forgot to write his column. Ah well, that's the tradeoff for wisdom: Senility.

Dr. Fishbreath

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London eksistenz

Let's face it, London has more than a few bright spots; it has always been a cultural epicentre and this month the collective creative force is sending out shock waves of new releases. It seems like everybody's got an album, and they are all good.

The best new club in town is Key West, on Talbot Street. With 85 seats everyone gets a good view of the band. Bob and Perry's 'anything goes' format ensures an excellent cross-section of musical styles; this spot represents musical heritage; from The Pace, to The Onyx, to The Key, it has served as a spotlight for original talent for years. Open til 3a.m. six nights a week.

The best way to acquaint yourself with the local sound here is to pick up a copy of the 11-band, CHRW compilation album *London Underground*. The first release party is September 17th at the Spoke, to be followed by another one at Bullwinkles' on the 20th. Serious college distribution ensures exposure for local faves like L.M.O.T.V., Ukase, Sheep Look Up, Condo Christ, Planet People etc.

Sheep Look Up are releasing 4 songs on their independent Slur label. The self-titled EP should be available the 3rd week of Sept. I used to think of these guys as a brooding bunch: scars on a tortured soul and all that, but the last couple of years has seen some humour emerge without taking the edge off. It serves them well on songs like 'Spagetti Western' and 'The Things She Says,' though my faves are 'Jazz Master' and 'The Rap-ture.'

Another primal music source is **Suffer Machine**. Their independent release *Burning Buffalo Music*, through World Records in Bowmanville, features 11 powerful original songs. It's due out the 1st week of Sept. They should be working on a video of the song 'Suffer Machine' with some interesting industry heavies, and a possible Stateside tour scheduled for XMas, but you don't have to be nostradamus to see them at Bullwinkles, Sept. 6th and at RPM Toronto, Sept 10, opening for Hollywood's **Tupelo Chain Sex**.

Another outstanding current release is **Len Horner's Hauf Human 86**. A multi-layered, introspective record, it features Len on everything except drums. It's very spiritual, textural, and haunting. Look for it in the top 5 of the campus Independent list.

Well, **Itsa Skitsa...** It's amazing what four guys can sing with a straight face. Really: entertainment personified. They have an album's worth of material in a can somewhere in Toronto and are currently negotiating whether they'll be seen in the British Film *Jive-after-Five*. We can expect their independent release early October. After the Spoke on the 17th, they headline at The Office on the 20th.

And it's a tough world, eh, doggie? **Nosmo King Jr.** play the Key Sept 18th.

What's this I hear about pickled beets...and we're not talking mangel-wurzel. **The Vegetable Harmonics** are not expected to play live immediately but we will try to keep you posted...

Unfortunately, we will not hear from the occasionally formed, disbanded, reformed **Planet People** until early Nov., when bass player Ralph Dame returns from his mid-west tour with heavy metal originals **Sabre**. With Brian back from Africa and John back from seeding the North, look for the hand bills.

For the spirit of the carnival, tune in to **L.M.O.T.V.** They bring humour with an R&B soundtrack to Toronto's Cabana Room Fri, Sept 12 and Sat Oct 11. As it says on the bathroom wall, these guys are a good time.

And finally, we arrive at **the Edna's**. Lisa and Nancy play somewhere in Stratford Sept. 11-13, they're not quite sure where. But prior to that they play Key West on the 7th. They do originals and covers on piano and sax, with spontaneous vocal support from the audience. All vocal supporters are hereafter known as Ednettes. This is music by plebiscite at its best.

Until next month, remember, London is a town where the politicians drive drunk and the mayor paves his intentions with interlocking stone. Bye y'all.

Sonja K

Winnipeg

Dear Nerve,

Things have been cookin' out here on the prairies!

Monuments Galore, a highly underrated but overly ubiquitous Winnipeg group won a CASBY for best Non-Recording Band. The award came as a complete surprise to all, especially considering they've only played Toronto once.

Expo and Cattle Production's CIRAC (Canadian Independent Recording Artists in Concert) have all but drained this city of our local bands. **The Beach Mutants**, **Fools Crow**, **Monuments Galore** and all the rest have made the exodus to Exploit (while on the topic—check out the great new single 'Expo Hurts Everyone,' which includes 'Billy and the Socreds' by **D.O.A.**, and 'Tyrannosaurus Wrexpo' by Montreal's **Rhythm Activism**).

GBH and **The CroMags** packed a "Kiddies" show at Le Rendezvous, while **54-40** completely sold out three sweltering shows at Broadway's nightclub, whose booking policy has changed from top 40 human jukeboxes to more innovative acts like **The Northern Pikes** and **The Kill**.

Edmonton's **SNFU** returned to whip up Winnipeggers and gave us the chance to see new drummer Ted Simms, a hometown fave formerly of **Last Gasp** and **Casual Primates**. He moved to Alberta three months ago to step into the boots vacated by Jon Card, now with **D.O.A.**

The drive to bring alternative radio to the University of Manitoba campus and Winnipeg's airwaves is picking up. A sold out UMR social featuring **Apocalypso**, **Combo Combo**, **Soul Volante** and **Monuments Galore** attempted to heighten awareness for the drive. A referendum is being held on campus in October, which requires 25 percent of the student population to vote. We're sick of listening to **NuShooz** and **Phil Collins**. If you have any suggestions concerning our quest, please write the U of M. Gotta go, school starts soon.

Gaylene K. Dempsey

HAMMER HAPPENINGS

(Hamilton)

Social Notes: The Churchill Park Sunday Baseball League social was a success overall, in spite of the cruddy sound and **D.L. Lee's** wardrobe. **The Mean Red Spiders** set was a success and **Brian "Slash Booze" Baird** will continue to play local gigs with the combo although **Slash** was heard to remark "I can't see myself doing a three-nighter in Weehawken." Weehawken's loss, I guess. **The Moon Crickets** are reviewing their strategy after their anticlimatic debut. Sez **Dave Hewitt**, "We may do more numbers tht people recognize, like 'Hang On Sloopy,' 'Louie Louie,' 'Farmer John' and 'Get off My Cloud.' There is no truth to the rumour, incidentally, that this writer and Cricket-bassist **Turk Thrust** are forming a **Stompin Tom Connors** cover band.

The finishing touches to the **Florida Razors** *King of Clang* LP have been done, including some very tasty horn parts and a solo vocal with an acoustic bass version of **Gord Lightfoot's** 'Oh Linda.' (N.B.: this sounds better than it reads.) The Razors are also threatening to release a 12" of 'Restless' before the **Trouble Boys** release their version. The song was co-written by **Nick Stipanitz** (of **Vypers** fame) and **Tim Gibbons**, and is currently a live fave in both bands' set lists.

The Dik Van Dykes have finished doing an arena recording and are making a career out of opening for **U.I.C.**...Og Records have expressed interest in the band for an upcoming edition of *It Came From Canada* (probably Vol 3 as they missed No. 2).

Majority of One will be headlining at Chuggies Sept. 6th and are casting eyes on the city of Toronto to succumb to their interpretation of Janorian Primal Therapy.

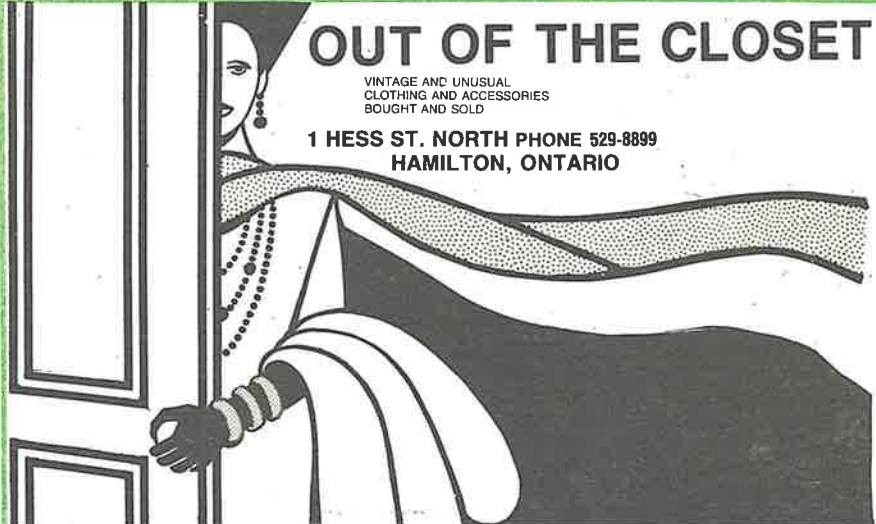
'Style' Magazine (Hamilton's answer to the *Village Voice*) is having a birthday bash to celebrate their first anniversary, Sept. 18th at Chuggies and will include 7-10 local bands including **Altogether Morris**, **the Dik Van Dykes**, **Maruhof Folly**, **the Throbs** (whose new EP *Proud To Be Loud* is the best MC5/Stooges/Ramones rehash to come out in the past six months), and (maybe) the **Moon Crickets**. Tkts \$7 at local hep music outlets.

It looks like the **Vypers** will release an E.P. (12") with a single to be pulled for possible radio airplay. **Zeke** (the token non-Hammer native in the group) was quoted, whilst relieving himself at the L.P.S.B.L.-do, as saying that "it would have to be a 12" EP as 7" singles are useless nowadays because nobody notices them on the racks." Too true.

And on a final note: **Alex Chilton** has been spotted touring the West Coast and is rumoured to be heading this way, with a possible stop-over in the Hammer. The cultural implications are enormous, and several well-known area groups may be vying for his production skills (look what he did for the **Cramps**!)

This may be even more significant; the **Flamin Groovies** have re-united, have released a single (on an Australian label) and are touring Down Under. Anybody who does not see the significance of this *deserves* to live in Toronto.

BF 'Mole' Mowat



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| 9: Sheep Look Up | 22: Headless Horsemen |
| 10: Frank Ridsdale | 23: Excitement of Searching & The Bodyheads |
| 11: Erik Stosh | 24: Lifeless Currents |
| 12: 63 Monroe | 25: Loveless |
| 13: Dioxine | 26: Suffer Machine |
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DRASTIC PLASTIC



Sigue Sigue Sputnik Flaunt It Manhattan

People magazine huffily dismissed Sigue Sigue Sputnik as "an over-hyped clique of no-talents who care more about the color of their lip-gloss than about their music."

All of which is probably true, but in typical scratch-and-sniff fashion, *People* has missed the point.

Have you ever worried that rock & roll might be nothing more than an exploitative scam, a conspiracy of commerce, a sustained guffaw at the gullibility of youth conceived by a canny bunch of corporate cynics who built a bandwagon, gave it a little push, and sat back to watch with a mixture of amusement and avarice as all those kids scrambled and fought to climb aboard? (Not until now —Ed.)

Well then, ladies and gentlemen, I give you Sigue Sigue Sputnik, the final rock & roll solution, the band (or someone's concept thereof) that lists its accountants (Touche Ross) in the credits of its first album, *Flaunt It*—the record that boasts, in a game-show host's voice: "I am the ultimate product."

Like Public Image Ltd., S.S.S. fancies itself a corporation. To give this conceit added credibility (and, let's be pragmatic, to help cover what must have been astronomical recording costs), the "Sputnik Corporation" has sold bonafide advertising space, both on the cover and in the

grooves of *Flaunt It* ("Studio Line from L'Oreal: Create Your Look," coos an anonymous voice).

And, yes, between ads, there are songs, all of which sound more or less the same (leader Tony James, who also co-founded Generation X, proudly admits as much in the *People* article), which means they're all equally catchy—and there's no way around it, they *are* catchy. There's an effective and specific formula at work here, and S.S.S. isn't afraid to wear the components on its inner sleeve, which contains a snippet that reads: "Vega/Idolistic/Rex...Elvis press on."

That's "Vega" as in Alan Vega, of Suicide (S.S.S. speeds up Suicide's stripped-down hypno-synth grooves, then tarts them up with liberal dollops of studio trickery and mechanized Chuck Berry guitar licks; and, like Vega, singer Martin Degville—the one with the leopard-skin fingernails—often intones lyrics in the manner of Elvis Presley getting a blowjob on heroin). That's "Idolistic" as in Billy Idol, (the quintessential bleached-out, teen rebel with the prefab pout; Tony James' former bandmate in Gen. X; the guy to whom two whole members of S.S.S. bear a remarkable and not coincidental resemblance). That's "Rex" as in T. Rex (whose alliterative, quasi-metaphorical gibberish about chrome-plated girl-cars and the androgynous space-age sex boogie S.S.S. borrows in lyrics such as: "I'm a Kustom Kar Kommando...I'm a Rio riot rampage...Princess Purrfect, white



Mercedes...Tilt back shiny pink and fishtail baby, fast as fast you can...Sex bomb boogie...Dance on. Sexy, sexy jaguar. You got it. You want it.")

You got it? You want it? Too bad, pal, you're stuck with it, 'cuz you name it and Sigue Sigue Sputnik flaunts it: Atari babies; heavenly bodies; affordable firepower; sex without passion; exploitation without shame; Giorgio Moroder in the control room; two drummers who seem somewhat superfluous on an album whose percus-

sion is, I swear, entirely programmed.

The album ends with the following declaration: "This digital recording was brought to you courtesy of EMI Records, the world's greatest music company—so great, one day we'll buy the company."

Tomorrow EMI, the day after, the world. Fuck this "Fifth Generation of Rock" stuff. The Third Reich & Roll is nigh. Sigue Heil!

Tim Powis

Throbs Proud to Be Loud Precision

After bitching about mid-sixties garage revivalism last month at Mid-nite Records' expense, I'm back to cheer on Hamilton's Throbs for perfecting early-seventies sludge metal revivalism on *Proud To Be Loud*. You see, the idea of rehashing Iggy, Alice and Noddy—as opposed to Roky, Moulty and ?—is an altogether different matter. I love that stuff, so it's OK.

Think of *Proud* as a metallic KO; next to the real thing, it sounds like a studied attempt to sound loose, rather than looseness itself. Play it in tandem with *Rocks* or *Kiss Alive* (smokin' vinyl!), and the Throbs come off a little mechanical. On any debut record, my guess is that one of two things happens: either the band assumes they'll never make another one and goes hog wild, or they hedge their bets until they become more familiar with studio conditions. Sounds like the latter happened here, but as soon as the Throbs realize they're essentially going

nowhere as fast as they know how, I'm sure they'll play with more abandon.

Regardless, *Proud* has lots to recommend itself. Siren guitars—loads of them. Anti-social behaviour ("I'll Do What I Want"). Complex politics ("Nuclear Attack"). Vocal homages to Frankie Venom. Fan Club info on the back cover. Bad mix. And real poetry for happenening people: "All the kids are goin' crazy/you ought to be out of your mind/summer days are makin' me lazy/grab a girl and we'll have a good time." There's seven reasons right there to buy *Proud*, and I wasn't even thinking hard.

It's worth noting that lead Throb Ron Collie was once a Viletone. Maybe I like this record so much because the ghost of Steve Leckie is running through the grooves (technically, Steve is not dead, but I think I hear his ghost anyway). The Viletones were easily the greatest band in the history of the Western world, and *Proud To Be Loud* might just be the beginning of Viletones nostalgia.

Phillip Dellio

Moev

Dusk and Desire Grapes of Wrath September Bowl of Green Netzwerk—Capitol

A comparison of these two bands seems ridiculous. Apart from a young, dynamic label (read: bound for glory or death), and journalistic rave-up about the Vancouver vanguard, they share little else. Or so it seems.

As any illiterate music writer will lead you to believe, pop music is the existential experience. The Meaning? Forget it. Ravish the impulse, ask no questions because it's Sartre for the 80s on your FM dial.

Some do this existential thing quite well (Jazz Butcher), very well (The Cure), and too well (Joy Division). But why slug the majors at the so called bush league? Why indeed.

Let's not mince words. Any album takes up roughly 45-minutes of your time and 45-minutes of mine. I become acutely aware of this while waiting for *September Bowl of Green* to end.

By the time the winsome, jangly guitar and earnest singing of 'Misunderstanding' roll around to 'Self-Abuse,' their Wonderbread appeal becomes a little stale. But wait. Before that irrevocable toss into the day olds bin, give it another spin.

But Moev's on deck.

Brilliant. Integrated keyboards rhythms work best with female vocals on songs like 'Sea-Missile Motel,' 'Ophelia,' and 'Circles and Squares.' Despite my intense aversion to Quebecois electropop (which it resembles but which it definitely isn't) and the awful repetitions of Trans X and the like, this pulsing beat is irresistible, relentless, and begs playing at maximum volume.

It's Wagner approaching the Vietcong beachhead. Power, magic, some kind of force controls it. I laughed I cried you'll never have it better...and best, it's domestic.

Another spin...

And yet another.

The original impressions of Grapes of Wrath are still there: the whining voice recalling chip Kinman in early Rank and File, especially in 'And I Know,' but with only half of his exuberance; in the instrumentation of 'Realistic Birds,' sensing Robert Smith's influence but, in the vinyl execution, none of its profound resonance—which brings us to the Jesus and Mary Chain. Our lads may share the Reid hair-do's but, with timid feedback experiments and unbecoming production gloss, certainly not the spirit.

Never mind. They're appealing as hell. See them live, even if you do leave before the set is finished. After all, when a band's playing, and you're not there...

Helen Lee

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Neil Young Landing On Water Geffen

One bit of writing I'll always remember is the review of *Black and Blue* Lester Bangs wrote for *Creem*. It wasn't exactly objective criticism; Bangs used the occasion for a rambling and very personal farewell to the Rolling Stones, essentially saying that the pressure was off because they were now meaningless in every sense of the word. The review took the tone of a sigh of relief, as if Bangs had grown tired of investing faith in a once vital commodity who now left him to guess his way through records that amounted to nothing more than product. He probably felt like a schmuck for waiting out *Goat Head's Soup* and *It's Only Rock'n'Roll*, but better late than never.

Of course, time has proved him right. Bangs is gone and the Rolling Stones are still here, but every album they've made since *Exile* has sucked by definition—including supposed triumphs like *Some Girls* and *Tattoo You*, which just managed to disguise their inadequacies a little better.

Let's take a moment to bid farewell to another casualty of the bozo wars, Neil Young. *Landing on Water* is Young's forth terrible album in a row, enough evidence to reasonably conclude that his creative powers have dissipated irrevocably. He may yet return to making solidly enjoyable records, but he'll have to come up with a new angle first—a harp-and-acoustic tribute to the Mary Chain, a fusion reworking of *Everybody Knows This is Nowhere*, maybe even the formation of Wynn, Kirkwood, Verlaine & Young. I doubt that he'll ever again affect anyone's life in a meaningful way simply by writing and playing his own songs, though. He's spent.

Landing on Water is the nadir of Young's decline. *Trans* and *Everybody's Rockin'* were at least so spectacularly misconceived that you could laugh at them—it was perversely funny to see Young take on the Stray Cats and lose. Last year's *Old Ways* was a pleasant sounding cipher, offensive only if you cared enough to examine its basic conceit ("back to the country"—as in "back to the country until I get this electro-shit down pat"). And now *Water* commits the biggest sin of all: it's an out-and-out bore, a servicable lump of AOR fodder that you could listen to a dozen times without recalling a single moment. There's no room to recall individual moments within such a wall of thundering nothingness. Young is listed on the credits as playing guitar, but he needn't have bothered; *Water* is a synthesizer extravaganza, bombarding you senseless with a three-layered attack that puts the likes of GTR to shame.

Lyrical, Young has discovered—as Lou Reed did on *The Blue Mask*—the joys of plainspeak. You know, forget about excess baggage like imagery, mystery, metaphor, allusion—all those poetic devices that Young manipulated with such ease throughout the seventies. Instead, say *exactly what you mean*:

"I used to carry
the weight of the world
On my back
I never trusted
my friends or my girl
Can you imagine that."

L'Etranger Sticks and Stones Subcanus Fifth Column To Sir With Hate

1. Where Men Come From:

Once upon a time, driving out to Scarborough to puke on some chick's parents' lawn was tantamount to telling the cops to fuck off at a rock show or coming home drunk at dinner, and telling your dad about it. Back in the days of the 35 cent draft, militant suburbia was expressed in three-chord songs about unemployment and episodes behind the public swimming pool. I went to see Ted Nugent at the CNE, but instead I saw the Ramones; while L'Etranger, at that same instant, became political and made a fuck of a lot of noise for East Side punks who quit hockey camp to start a rock band.

Three EPs later, lead singer Andy Cash shouts, "The things that you remember are always the things that you wish," which is as fine a narration on young adulthood as I've heard. But with *Sticks and Stones*, L'Etranger lie down on the railroad tracks, hoping that for one last time the music industry train will show some mercy and spare them their final life. Three EPs later, the old song is fading.

L'Etranger have always been heralded as great white hopefuls, carrying the collective weight of suburban defiance from their gigs at Rock Against Racism benefits to their recent tour of Western Canada. But now, on *Sticks and Stones*, I hear inward desperation. Before, when Andy Cash sang about desolation in the middle of the night on the Yonge Street subway platform, the music seethed with compas-

sion; 'Taken Away,' from the first EP, bridged the loneliness of the teenager with the loneliness of Everyman, a gallant feat coming from four socially-conscious hacks. But on a song like 'Wrestling with the Nice Stuff,' from this EP, the singer betrays his vision and finds only despair, punctuated with "wise people dressing up like fools...straight jacket phrases light up my friends eyes." On 'Time and Place,' Cash shouts: 'There is a time and place/It could be today,' but you know that it isn't and you don't know how to get there and damned if he'll tell you even if he is your friend.

The metamorphosis of L'Etranger from a 'punk' band to a 'pop' band happened somewhere between the time they were spat at while opening for the Dead Kennedys to the time they enlisted Tim Vesely as their new bassist. With Vesely taking the reins from Chuck Angus, L'Etranger relaxed; on stage, they were no less intense, but more focused, perhaps safer. *Innocent Hands* might have been too opaque in the rhetoric, left too many questions. But here, filtered through a softer overall sound, the arguments seem almost pallid in comparison.

If this group indeed wants to channel into more assured pop streams, then they should have made a real, grown-up rock album: the Ralph Steadman-like cover and the junky graphics retract the confidence factor: it makes them look like a punk band. Again.

2. Where Women Come From

Unlike L'Etranger, who may have grown too old for their righteous emblem, Fifth Column wear no Scarlet Letters. Despite their bum rap as psychopathic feminists, *To Sir With Hate* is a

Those are the opening lines of *Water*, and I find everything about them depressing: the silly rhyme, the smug sentiment, the prospect of embarking on a journey into Mister Roger's neighbourhood. It gets no better, as Young takes a songwriter-in-search-of-a-subject tour through burnt-out hippies (an old stand-by), 9 to 5 madness, and the derelict life—never appearing to be writing from less than a thousand miles away.

In retrospect, *Rust Never Sleeps* was the worst thing that ever happened to Young. The resounding success of the half acoustic/half electric format employed there led Young away from the notion that an album—though it can certainly have an underlying theme—is primarily a collection of songs; henceforth, every album became an idea first, with everything else secondary. He got away with it on *Hawks and Doves* and the great *Reactor*, possibly because he was still interested in making imaginative noise on a guitar. And then, following his own advice, he died a quick and painless death.

Phillip Dellio



modern attempt to web humanist ideas with an almost cubist pop style. Although their detractors will find the album title misanthropic, Fifth Column points no fingers and find no enemies. In the way that *Sticks and Stones* wasn't enlightening, *To Sir With Hate* is.

This is, in every way, an intelligent, crafted and sly record. On the title song, the opening bars promise a cut-throat dirge, but what follows is Mr. Baker ("cruel as a happy general") is strung up because he cannot evade the Fifth Columnist's glare ("nothing's right if you let him out of your sight") and eventually, he falls victim to the girl's insinuating manipulation.

This group's subject matter is sensitive and delicate, yet they approach it assuredly and carefully. A song like 'The Fairview Mall Story' is quite profound, seemingly at odds with their staple colliding rhythms and cat-clawed guitar. Singer Caroline chooses her images with fine-toothed accuracy—'Fairview Mall' depicts the tragedy of a diseased suburbia through the tale of one man's anxiety: "Sittin' in his den, the Principal feels lonely, wants a tom-boy...where are my car keys, I'm going to the mall, honey..." The song strikes out at the promised land of the subdivision, where middle-aged and middle-income men seek sanctuary in the washroom stalls when they cannot find it at home.

To Sir With Hate leaps the boundaries of mere anti-music; it is an album that is not comfortable to listen to, but is nonetheless compassionate, warm and wholly likeable. It puts the trashy scatology of Lydia Lunch in the dustbin and it supercedes thrash-and-dare punkism by using careful symbols to represent whatever anger it may possess. Fifth Column may be the best thinking-woman's band ever. But I like to consider them those smart girls around the corner.

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The Epidemics
Shankar/Caroline
ECM

Maybe that should be Shankar/Caroline: *The Epidemics*. Who cares. This is the most vapid piece of shit I've ever heard—and not in the usual ECM, nordic frost kind of way.

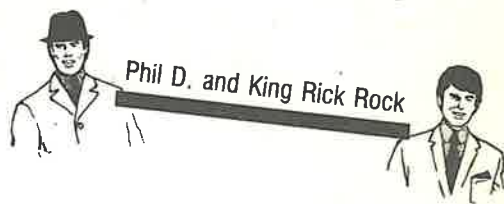
It's a bunch of mind-numbingly drab, simplistic pop songs, sung by session violinist Shankar and someone named Caroline (smart girl—to avoid insults this record will inevitably prompt, she dropped her surname).

Neither one can sing worth a damn, but the Epidemics' problems run much deeper. The electro-drum/synth-dreck bed tracks are stolid and stiff enough to use on *20 Minute Workout*. The lyrics are nothing more than repetitious lovey-dovey or self-help platitudes. Shankar plays the odd brief solo on his fancy 10-string fiddle, but the malady lingers on—it's all so perfunctory, he must have dragged his feet to the studio every day.

Guest guitarist Steve Vai plays half-assed, tossed-off excuses for power chords and uninspired mini-solos. Vai may yet supplant Eddie Van Halen as the world's premier dippy-doodle axe hero, but only in spite of this record. If you really want to hear him rip, try David Lee Roth's *Eat 'Em and Smile* or, even better, PiL's *Album*, on which Shankar also plays.

Tim Powis

SIX Pack



King Rick Rock: We got a Six pack and nothin' to do...

Phil D.: Forget that. Six Pack is back! Hey, we got a lot of time to make up for, so let's wail babes!

R-R: Take a pill dude. Special Six Pack guest this month include Atari Tim P., on mellotron and DX7, Dave Cave on autoharp, and Sheena Lanthier on electric armpit. Let's do it, babes!

Dio
Intermission
Warner Bros.

P: Pussy metal, son, I didn't work my way up from a sharecropper's shack to listen to this.

R-R: Give it a minute, there, Flash, they're probably still rolling the band onstage on a fleet of replica German panzers and waiting for the smoke machines to build up enough to start the laser hologram show.

D: Hey, guys, you mean this is it?

R-R: What's the matter there, Atari Tim, you look kinda hang-dog.

T: Ahhh, Blue Cheer were way better'n these guys.

P: What's he talking about?

The Cult
Rain/Revolution 12"
Polygram

P: Hey, look, like I told Ian last week, I said "Babe, these double A-sides are strictly for bozos. Give 'em an unreleased track on the b-side, it gives, you know, street credibility, know what I mean?"

R-R: You met Ian Astbury? How?

P: He came to this thing I held on the observation deck of the Empire State Building. He gate-crashed, but so did Rod and Alana, so I had to let him in.

D: Fuck the Empire State Building, man. You mean this is it? This is Six Pack?

P: What is he talking about?

T: Ahhh, the Kingsmen were way better'n these guys.

Deaf Dealer
Keeper of the Flame
Polygram

R.R.: You know, since this album sucks, I thought I'd take this opportunity to thank our fans out there for the flood of mail.

P: Hey, who do you think you are? I'm the one who gets to talk to the camera here. Where do you get off hogging the spotlight? You're all riding on my coat-tails here.

R-R: What's he talking about?

D: Come on, man, is this it? Where's the chorus line? The live sex act? The greased midgets doing backflips into pools of molten breakfast cereal? This is Six-Pack, man! There's gotta be more!

T: Ahh, Bix Beiderbecke was way better'n these guys.

Paul McCartney
Press 12"
Capitol

R-R: Didn't this guy used to be someone?

P: Has-been. Strictly C-list. Like I told Michael Musto last week, if you're not happening, you don't get invited. You've gotta be selective, even at the Palladium.

R-R: What are you talking about?

D: Is it my hair? What do you want me to do? My cosmetologist is out of town, the Armani's in the cleaner's. The trust fund's running out! Just give me this chance! Let me live the Six Pack experience!

T: Ahhh, Al Jolson was way better'n this guy.

Magnum
On a Storyteller's Night

P: Would somebody tell Dave Cave to get off the floor? He's changing the ionization of the air, and I'm expecting a call from Ahmet Ertegun any moment, and how will I explain weeping in the background to a man with a Lear in five major cities?

R-R: 'Héy, Phil, lighten up! Six Pack, man, remember? The good old days. Black Label and pretzels! Punk Rock! Don't give me that look, man! The album, Phil, say something witty and erudite about the album!

P: Rick, please!

S: It's like watching Fraggles Rock real late at night in the basement of your parent's place during a rainstorm while your brother plays his Black Sabbath albums upstairs.

P: Exactly!

T: Yeah! Right!

Onslaught
The Force
Fringe Product

P: This is more like it! Real metal. I was at this thing on the coast last week, and somebody was wild enough to get Metallica to play on a raised stage in the pool. Sean got into it, but I think Madonna had her mind on Lief, this bodybuilder they hired to serve drinks on his torso. It was a muscle party, and I bought this Kenzo outfit and absolutely shredded it. Lucky I'd been going to the tanning clinic.

R-R: Watch out there Phil, you're knocking over the blowtorch.

D: Hey, man, you set fire to Tim's hair. Alright! Six Pack!

P: Don't pour the champers on him, I paid a wad for the case at the duty-free in Milan.

R-R: It's okay, he's asleep, anyway.

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SHADOWY MEN: SPACE CASES

Captain's Log, Star Date 21:16:33 — Spock was off listening to Philip Glass again, McCoy was digging the Monroe Brothers, Chekov was doin' the underground bop to the Ganelin Trio, Soo Loo was head-banging at a Loudness gig, and Scotty had 100 Pipers on the box. An average Sunday afternoon on the *Enterprise*.

Suddenly, a strange craft shaped like a cheese pizza whirled into view. We scanned for life-forms, but all we could make out were three laughing silhouettes with their hair standing on end. Without warning, we encountered the biggest, fastest, hardest, loudest TWAANNNNNG-GGG!! anybody's ever heard! (We all grabbed the nearest furniture while the cameras shook for effect.) Then it happened again: TWAANNNNNGGGG!!

We were being assaulted with Surf Guitar music. But it wasn't just surf guitar music, that's the thing! It was like an updated Ventures and Dick Dale that had somehow found the lyricism of Tom Verlaine, the sonic boom of Arto Lindsay, the subtle humor of the Feelies. After an attack of several minutes, the beings shouted something at us. I couldn't make it out entirely, but it sounded like 'Theme From T.V.!'

"What do you make of it, Jones?"

"It's rockin' music, Jim!" he rasped.

"Scotty?"

"That last twang skipped the flay rod on the treddle. Cap'n, the dilithium crystals are over-heatin' and we just haven't got the power."

"Can you fix it?"

"Aye. It'll take all we've got, but I'll give 'er a try."

"Spock?"

"A style of popular music marked by a heavily accented beat and a simple, repetitious phrase structure. What Dr. McCoy crudely referred to as 'rockin' music.' This particular style is further marked by the melodic twanging of a trebly, reverberated electric guitar. A variation known as..."

"Surf music. Yes I know. But this had more on the ball than that. Analysis?"

"According to my calculations, Captain, judging from the music and the silhouettes, I'd say we're dealing with Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet."

We checked the ship's computer. The trio were indeed the Shadowy Men, formerly involved in The Crash Kills Five incident. Their music: loud, angular. Answer to the names Don, Reed, Brian. Except for the twang, a peaceful people. Unless you call them revivalists—in which case they attempt to vaporize you.

One unique factor: They were masters of Humorous Event. Before each twang attack, they'd invariably do something ludicrous. Once, on Kam Er unn Hous, they brought out Bugs Bunny's singing frog. Another time, on Reeva Lee, they set up a mock planetarium "laser" show with smoke bombs, flashlights, and sparklers. Apparently, they'd been all over Canada back in the 1980's on Earth.

I tried to contact their ship on the screen, and reached the three laughing, stubby silhouettes. "We come in peace," I said. "We enjoyed the sound of your twang, but don't do it again because our ship will melt. I'm Captain James T. Kirk of the USS *Enterprise*, and I'd like to invite you aboard for some beer."

"On our way!" they shouted as one.

When they beamed up, they took on human form—apparently the stubby shadows are a convenient protective coloration they developed from a sloppy poster graphic. Don was large, brush-cut, subdued, and drummed hard enough to roast a Baffilian Skeedooba at 500 ft. Reed was a short, effervescent fellow with curly locks, whose over-sized bass was more melodic than bluntly supportive. Brian was the ace guitarist, and sported a sardonic grin and a slight paunch. All three were comedians—not a straight man in the bunch.

I understand you entered the Calgary Song Contest in 1985," I ventured.

Suddenly the three creatures leapt up on the lounge table and sang out in horrible baritone to the tune of "Bonanza":

"It's a friendly town, it's a friendly town, Cal-ga-ry! A friendly town, a friendly town, a friendly town indeed! Lots of friends, lots of friends, lots of friends indeed! We got friends, we got friends, we got all you need! It's a friendly town, it's a friendly town, Cal-ga-ry! A friendly town, a friendly town, a friendly town indeed! EEEEEEEEEAAAAOW! Woooo! WOOH! Yip Yip Yip!!! YEEEEARRGH!"

"Anyway, we still haven't heard if we've won," said Reed.

How do you come up with songs to fit the twang?," I inquired.

"We say, let's write a song about being in bed at midnight when you were 8-years-old, and you're looking at your closet and seeing snakes."

Don: "Bugs Bunny is our biggest influence."

Reed: "I don't know how many times we've been in key situations and asked ourselves, 'What would Bugs do?'"

Don: "We write a whole bunch of riffs that we don't know where we stole them from. Then we join them together by riffs that we know where we've stolen them from."

It wasn't listed on the ship's computer, but it turned out the Shadowy Men have a lethal hatred of singers.

Don: "We had a singer but he quit two days into rehearsals. Who needs 'em? Grrr!"

Reed: "If you have a singer, the music becomes background music."

"But we've got 11 syllables now: theme-from-tee-vee, boo-la-boo-la, and wo-man-shake."

Don: "Musically, we're like a rock'n'roll tractor, plowin' our field."

Brian: "We started doing this to kill time on weekend afternoons. We heard tapes of it and we were holding our ribs for days, 'cause it was so funny. We just kinda kept on going."

We talked about how Don plays through Helix' old drum kit, which he won in a MuchMusic contest by helping a friend answer Helix trivia questions. Brian thanked the entire world for ignoring the Shadowy Men on CASBY night—apparently some bizarre ritual of intense boredom. Reed asked that I make it known in the galaxy that the Men are available for babysitting.

We went down to the transporter room and they beamed back to their cheese-pizza craft. (Or is it Kraft?) They said they do the Twang Attack fairly regularly on Kam Er Unn Hause, Reeva Lee, and other planets. I promised myself I'd catch the twang again—at a safe distance from the *Enterprise* and settled back into my Captain's chair on the bridge.

"Rockin' music, Jim," growled McCoy, still frothing.

"Indeed," said Spock as he arched his eyebrow heavenward, to complete his ironically incredulous expression.

I smiled my usual episode-closing grin. "Set a course for Planet Nurv, Mr. Chekov," I said. "Ahead warp factor seven."



Don, Reed, Brian —Steve Ralph

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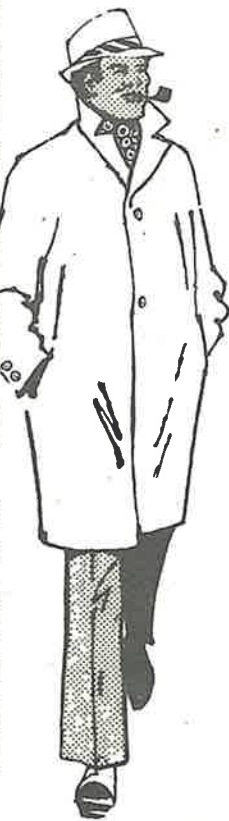
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Lee's Upstairs til Wed
TOO MUCH TOO SOON: Isabella til Tues
FLYING DEBRIS: Grossman's til Wed
JOHN EDDIE: EIMocambo
NORTHERN PIKES, VIS A VIS: Diamond
Fred's Bicycle Repair Shop: Rivoli
LAZO: Bamboo
B Fest 'The Max Headroom Story': Big Bop
TIM GIBSON, BUSKER: Call The Office
MANIC MONDAY: Key West

Tuesday 9

Cabana Cafe w/SWINGHAMMER
VIRGIL SCOTT BAND & Guests: Diamond
A Wedge Of Night, J.D. & THE PLEASERS,
ITSA SKITSA, FIRST MAN OVER: Lee's
DREAM SYNDICATE, GROOVY RELIGION: RPM
Kids In The Hall: Rivoli
DELTA KICKERS: Cameron
COCADA: Bamboo til Wed
B Fest 'Nightmares of the North': Big Bop
SADDLE TRAMPS: Call The Office
SHEEP LOOK UP: Key West

Wednesday 10

SHARK GRAFFITI, SKEPTIC TANKS
THE WAITING, CATCH 22: Lee's
JACK DEKEYZER BAND: Isabella til Fri
STICKLE BACK: Cameron
TUPALO CHAIN SEX, SUFFER MACHINE,
OCTOBER CRISIS: RPM
'Not Quite the Festival of Festivals': Rivoli
THIN LINE: Call The Office
FRANK RIDSDALE: Key West
B Fest 'Contemporary World Schlock '86': Big Bop

Thursday 11

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
HUMPHREY GO CART: Cabana
'Electric Circus': Rivoli til Fri

Friday 12

L.M.O.T.V.: Cabana
A NEON ROME: Lee's
PARTS FOUND IN SEA,
GROOVY RELIGION, BORY GROVE: Lee's Upstairs
BLUE RODEO: Horseshoe
THE WAITING: Call The Office til Sat
AC DC: Grandstand (Yeeowzal)
JACK DEKEYZER BAND: Isabella
LAUREL & THE BLUE ROCKETS: Isabella (lower)
B Fest 'By The Rocket's Red Glare': Big Bop
THE FORGOTTEN 'REBELS': EIMocambo
RAY CONDO: Cameron til Sat
63 MONROE: Key West

Saturday 13

JEFF HEALEY: Clintons
JACK DEKEYZER: Horseshoe
RED ALERT, LIVINGROOM: Lee's
COMPANY TOWN, PRIVATE SECTOR: Lee's Upstairs
THE DUNDRELLS: Rivoli
ODYSSEY: Bamboo
RAY CONDO: Cameron
B Fest 'Best of the B': Big Bop
THE PHANTOMS: Isabella
GLEN RICKETS: EIMocambo
THE PLAGUE: Isabella (lower)
DIOXINE: Key West

Sunday 14

Blues Jam, Talent Showcase: Lee's
SEBASTIAN: Isabella
LARRY GOODHAND BLUES: Grossman's
De Ska's 'Garden of the Finzi Contin': Rivoli
MAGGOT FODDER: Key West

Monday 15

PAT BETTY: Bamboo
GAIL LANDAU: Horseshoe til Tues
Fred's Bicycle Repair Shop: Rivoli
BRATTY & THE BABYSITTERS: EIMocambo(downstairs) til the 27th
VIS A VIS, GO INTERNATIONAL,
PERFECT WORLD: Copa
PAUL JAMES BAND: Clinton's all week
NATIONAL STEAL: Isabella
ROCKING HORSE, SHARK GRAFFITI
LAUGHING APPLES: Lee's
Illustrated Men: Lee's Upstairs til Wed
JEFFREY HATCHER: Grossman's
TIM GIBSON: Call The Office
Maniac Monday: Key West

Friday 5

PRINCE CHARLES: Bamboo
STARK NAKED & THE FLESHTONES,
DAVID MacINTYRE: Lee's
THE GROUND: Lee's Upstairs
SONNY BAKER, SADDLE TRAMPS: Cabana
THE ONE SHOT BAND: Isabella (lower) til Sat
KEN MYHR & THE EXPLOSIONS: Cameron
BREEDING GROUND: Rivoli til Sat
THIN LINE: Call the Office
UKASE: Key West til Sat
B Fest 'Untamed Youth': Big Bop

Saturday 6

MURRAY MCLAUCHLAN: Horseshoe
CHILL: Lee's

ALBERT'S HALL

SEPT. 8 - 13



DUTCH MASON

B.B. King calls this native Nova Scotian "The King of Canadian Blues". A 34-year veteran of the scene, Dutch delivers a lethal mix of jazz-inspired swing blues and hard-driving "Bluenose" boogie. "Dutch Mason's got the blues, and he's got 'em with a vengeance." (Calgary Herald)

SEPT. 10

Opening:
Texas Lounge Lizards

SEPT. 15 - 20



EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON
and Crazy Rhythm

Renowned as both a jazz great and a classic blues shouter, this veteran master of the alto has unmatched sax appeal! For the first time in Toronto, he teams up with Crazy Rhythm to bring his jazz sound to Albert's Hall. Jazz or blues, he always delivers with raw and gutsy vocals that will tear your soul apart.

SEPT. 22 - 27



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SEPT. 29 - OCT. 4



BLUE RODEO

Blue Rodeo... blue country. They embrace rock, pop and country in a style accessible to most everyone. "I'm proud to be on the same stage with them." (Kris Kristofferson, The Diamond, May 30, 1986)

OCT. 6 - 11



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Tuesday 16

JOHN WHITE: Bamboo
THE GROUND: Rivoli
I N I REGION: Isabella
Wedge, PARTICLE ZOO, THIN LINE,
BEAT A MANIA: Lee's
BLUE RODEO, JACK DEKEYZER,
JOHNNY DEE FURY: Copa
Cabana Cafe w/JULIA FEAR: Cabana
PINK SHIPS: Cameron
THE TOKENS: Call the Office

Wednesday 17

GOOD BROTHERS, PAUL JAMES,
DOWNCHILD, JOHNNY LOVESIN,
HOCK WALSH, KENDELL WALL:
Horseshoe
Poetry Sweatshop: Rivoli
TECHNICOLOUR YAWN, HALLOWED GROUND:
Cabana
MICAH BARNES, BRATTY: Diamond
THIN MEN: Cameron
RAUNCH HANDS, GREAT PLAINS,
PURPLE TOADS: RPM
BOP TOTEM: Isabella
BIG PICTURE, SHOCK CULTURE: Lee's
CAP'T SCARLET & THE MYSTERIANS:
Key West
THIS ILL FILE: Call The Office

Thursday 18

SATELLITES: Bamboo til Sat
I.N.B., LAUGHING APPLES
PLATFORM 7, RON ALLEN: Rivoli
3 BLUE EYES: Lee's
BAKKA PO, POISONED: Lee's Upstairs
WHITE BOYS GET RUDE: Grossman's til Sat
JACK DEKEYZER BAND: Isabella til Sat
PRETTY GREEN: Cameron
CIRCA: Isabella Lower
BAKKA PO, POISON: Lee's Upstairs
SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS, NO LIFE:
R.P.M.
GENYA RAVEN, JOANNE MACKELL:
Horseshoe til Sat
TULPA: Call the Office Til Fri
NOSMOKING JR.: Key West

Friday 19

GENYA RAVEN, JOANNE MACKELL:
Horseshoe
SEVEN SISTERS: Rivoli
VACATION IN DRESDEN: Cabana
DIREKTIVE 17 (upstairs), BLUE RODEO:
Lee's
RED ALERT, BRASS SOLDIER: ElMocambo
GAS MONEY & CIGARETTES:
Isabella (Lower)
NOSMOKING JR. Cameron
OCTOBER CRISIS: Key West

Saturday 20

SATELLITES: Bamboo
GENYA RAVEN, JOANNE MACKELL:
Horseshoe
SUPREME BAGG TEAM: Cabana
SEVEN SISTERS: Rivoli
SOUTHPAW: Isabella (lower)
JACK DEKEYZER BAND: Isabella
DIREKTIVE 17, BLUE RODEO: Lee's
THE RIVER STREET BAND: ElMocambo
HANDSOME NED: Cameron
PAUL JAMES BAND: Clinton's
ITSA SKITSA: Call the Office
I.U.C.: Key West

Sunday 21

De Sica's 'Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow':
Rivoli
Blues Jam, Talent Showcase: Lee's
A WHOLE BUNCH OF JACKS: Key West
BOBBY KING & THE BENDERS: Grossman's

Monday 22

MORGAN DAVIS: Clinton's Til Wed
HIT SQUAD, BLIND DESTINY,
CIRCUIT BREAKER: Lee's
Illustrated Men: Lee's Upstairs
GENESIS: CNE Stadium
DANNY MARKS & THE GROUP: Isabella
THE LINCOLNS: Horseshoe til Wed
MOLLY JOHNSON: Cameron
MIKE MACDONALD: Grossman's til Wed
PRYME Tyme: Bamboo
HEADLESS HORSEMEN: Key West
FRANK RIDSDALE: Call the Office

Tuesday 23

RON SEXSMITH: Cabana
DISCHARGE: R.P.M.
Wedge, SKEPTIC TANKS, MANICS,
STILL LIFE: Lee's
EMPORTE: Bamboo
DOUG & THE SLUGS: Diamond
DEBBIE JONES: Cameron
STEVE McCANN: Call The Office
EXCITEMENT OF SEARCHING,
THE BODY HEADS: Key West

Wednesday 24

BEAT A MANIA, VERTICLE: Cabana
MORGAN DAVIS: Clinton's
GLEN RICKETS: Bamboo
Nuclear Awareness Benefit: Lee's
THE CAMEO BLUES BAND: Isabella to Sat
HEADLESS HORSEMEN, T-MEN,
LINK PROTRUDIE, 3'O'CLOCK TRAIN: RPM
JOHNNIE LOVESIN: Diamond
BRASS SOLDIER: Cameron
THE LINCOLNS: Horseshoe
THOSE DARN BIPEDS: Call The Office
LIFELESS CURRENTS: Key West

Thursday 25

SUN ZOOM SPARK
STRANGER THAN FICTION: Cameron
SUN MESSENGERS: Bamboo til Sat
NANCY SIMMONS: Grossman's til Sat
FICTION: Cabana
ZAPPACOSTA & THE PARTLAND: Copa
THE IKONS: Rivoli
YO: Chuggies
NORTHERN PIKES: Horseshoe til Sat
PLAYHOUSE 90: Lee's
JACK DEKEYZER BAND: Clinton's til Sat
KHROMA KEY, PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS:
Lee's Upstairs
JOHNNY TRASH: Isabella (lower)
JOANNE MACKELL: Cameron til Fri
L.M.O.T.V.: Call the Office til Sat
LOVELESS: Key West

Friday 26

DUNDRELLS: Cabana
54-40, YO: Guelph U.
HERATIX: Rivoli
INB: ElMocambo
OZZY OSBORNE: Grandstand
CAMEO BLUES BAND: Isabella
NORTHERN PIKES: Horseshoe
DICKIES: Bridge

MALCOLM BURN: Isabella (lower) til Sat
SUFFER MACHINE: Key West
JOANNE MACKELL: Cameron
THE PROOF: Lee's

Saturday 27

RAYO TAXI, THE BLENDERS: Cabana
CAMEO BLUES BAND: Isabella
YO, GROOVY RELIGION: Lee's
NUROTICS: Call The Office
SUN MESSENGERS: Bamboo
SLY & ROBBIE, HALF PINT,
YELLOW MAN, INI KAMOZE: Concert Hall
SCREAMING BAMBOO,
AMOEBIA QUICHE: Rivoli
JACK DEKEYZER: Clintons
HANDSOME NED: Cameron
NORTHERN PIKE: Horseshoe
IDENTITY CRISIS,
BARE BACK: Lee's Upstairs
THIN LIFE: Key West
ZEOTROPE, LEFE SENTENCE: Bridge

Sunday 28

Blues Jam, Talent Showcase: Lee's
EDNA & EDNA: Key West
TOBY LARK: Diamond
JOE HALL: Grossman's

Monday 29

Film Benefit: Key West
Fred's Bicycle Repair Shop: Rivoli
College & University Talent Showcase:
Copa til Tues
MORGAN DAVIS: Grossman's all week
CAJUN LUST: Bamboo
KEN WHITELY PARADISE REVUE:
Horseshoe
FRANK RIDSDALE: Call The Office
THE KINGS: ElMocambo
TIME WARP: Lee's
Illustrated Men: Lee's Upstairs
JOANNE MACKELL & THE YAHOO'S:
Clinton's
MOLLY JOHNSON: Cameron

Tuesday 30

RED LIFE: Rivoli
DISIE FLYERS, BLUE RODEO: Bamboo
ELIM HALL: Call The Office
WEDGE, BENDRES, DAVID WATT's
GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY
SANDY BLAKELEY: Cabana
RALPH KEMP: Cameron

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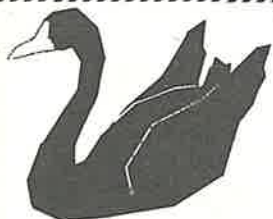
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Thu. 11 ☐ PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, HUMPHREY GO CART
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Thur. 25 ☐ SUN ZOOM SPARK, STRANGER THAN FICTION
Fri. 26 ☐ DUNDRELLS
Sat. 27 ☐ RAYO TAXI, THE BLENDERS

Tues. 30 ☐ CABANA CAFE w/SANDY BLAKELEY

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Tuesday September 9: *Metro Food Share—An R&B Extravaganza featuring*
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THE DIAMOND'S BACK TO SCHOOL WEEK

Wednesday September 10: *MUCHMUSIC NIGHT* Featuring V.J. ERICA EHM
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Thursday September 11: **THE RIVERSTREET BAND**
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Friday & Saturday September 12, 13: *THE DIAMOND'S ALL-DANCE WEEKEND*
Featuring DJ JASON STEELE (As seen on The David Letterman Show)
Cover: Fri. \$5, Sat. \$6 (\$1 off with Student I.D.)

Wednesday September 17: *MICAH IS BACK!*
The Toronto Debut of The New **MICAH BARNES BAND**
Special Guests: **BRATTY & THE BABYSITTERS** tkts at door

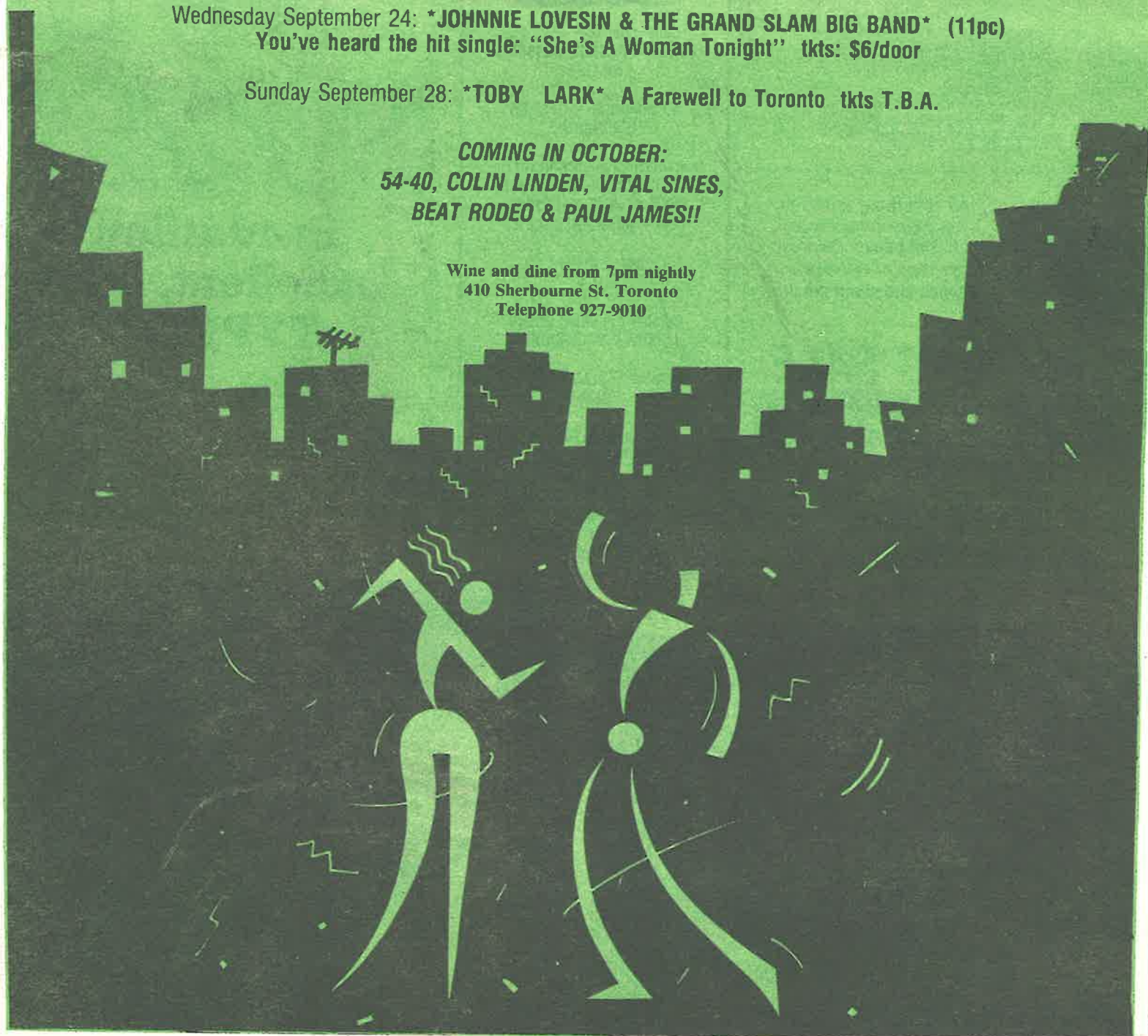
Tuesday September 23: *Q107 presents the return of the bad boys of Canadian rock*
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Wednesday September 24: **JOHNNIE LOVESIN & THE GRAND SLAM BIG BAND** (11pc)
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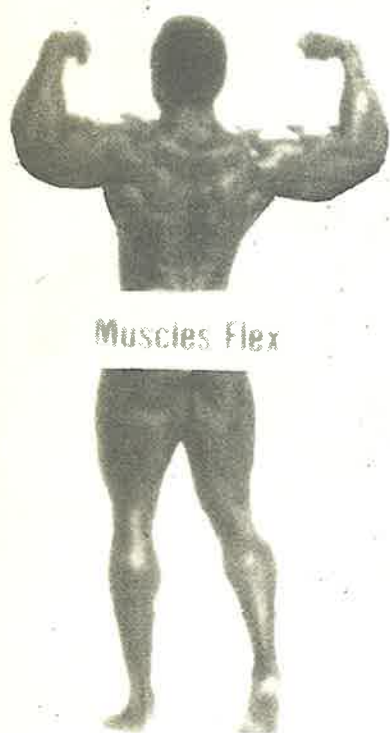
Sunday September 28: **TOBY LARK** A Farewell to Toronto tkts T.B.A.

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Bidini



EX-Patriot

Diane, her make-up cream running from the sweat of the August sun, is pointing to a friend who is kneeling on the pavement and wretching under the shadow of the Double Loop. "She drank too much," she says bluntly. "Party til you puke, that's what the Ex is about! She'll be OK. Round one is almost over."

The rest of the Midway parade ignores Diane's friend, her howling drowned out by the gnashing of the neon machines and the fair's loud bark: Step-up, Step-in, Shoot-em-up and win, betcha, betcha, betcha. Kill-em-dead and we pay. Diane's friends' tube-top has just slipped down her back and, without flinching, Diane winks at me. "We go for jocks. Lotsa jocks at the Ex. You'd be surprised, all them fat guys, bellies hanging out, working for the fair, they're real nice. Are you guys jocks?" She helps her friend up and they stumble towards The Zipper. You move right up, take your chances and party til you puke. It'll cost you an E ticket, pal.

"People haven't ridden the Double Loop in years. They made all that noise about it, now look...it's this whole business about paying 50 cents a game, a buck-fifty a ride, 5 bucks to get in and 3 bucks for a beer: It would cost you a hundred dollars

just to bring a lady. People can't afford that. They're not comin'. It ain't fun anymore."

Al operates the Glass Funhouse, which used to be the Disco Funhouse, which is broken today because of corrosion in the hydro wires. The Funhouse, like the Double Loop, slouches within the amusement park, looking prehistoric. Children hand Al their tickets and Al tells them that it will be open later today. When they disappear, he casually reveals that he doubts if it can be saved.

The CNE's glory days are gone and Al makes me realize that it's not just my childhood feeding back on me: The Ex has turned sour. Instead of Indian coin banks and mood rings, today's prizes are portable radios, posters of Van Halen, and velvet paintings; no longer do carnies stand on their carpeted pedestals and recite their rap; I used to sniff out girls beside the Fish Pond but now I watch the Double Loop spin while the masses drag their feet.

"It ain't that bad," says Edwin, who is hawking a one-dollar dart game that offers Walkmans, or tacky drinking trays, as its prizes. "Pretty girls come by, talk to Edwin, spend their cash. I know where their wishes lie." Edwin competes with the neighbourhood golf-putting game where the winners receive stuffed toy frogs. He works hard to overwhelm his competition. "I got a gimmick, see. I just open up my arms, shout

Halleluia!; and I grab their necks. I just reel them in. They come panting, man. Panting!"

At the north end of the Ex, Black-Jack Jones performs country and western favorites, a gig he has held for the past five years. He travels with other fairs to places like Calgary and Edmonton where the circus enchants cowboys and bulls and pays for Jack's train fare.

"This is the way I survive. The best people are in Calgary, but Toronto is great. I love the tourists. They really listen to me. They'll sit for hours on those benches and just listen."

"Once I made a hundred dollars. I packed up my suitcase, left town to go fishing, and got myself arrested. I got drunk, hit a man over the head with a bar stool, and ended up Diseased, Depressed and Disgusted with life. I knew I was under the wing of an Angel, only the Angel was dead; I had killed it, like I had killed my own soul. People, I was down so far that I was burnt by the flames of Hell! Oh Lord, the Good Lord, who giveth Love to those who Hate...He watched me, He Saw Me! He picked me up and saved me!"

Is that how you got back into the fair?

"They let me into their hearts. And my name is Hank Williams, the late king of country music..." Then he went right into a song.

A child says: "They used to have a pony. They didn't have the pony. It was a horse. No, it was a pony. It was as small as a baby."

There is no pony, no pull-the-string game, but there is bingo, cotton candy, Janet Jackson's "Nasty Boys", The Spider and the pig races, all of which are pretty neat. Outside of the Midway, the Canada building displays Bryan Adams' gold record and the latest in corn harvesters; the Food building has cleaned up the foreign growth strains that were existing between the cracks in the floor; and I saw 3 air-bands, one juggler who had just quit school, and a clown getting a drink of water from the bathroom sink. It was rumoured that Rob Halford from Judas Priest had been spotted riding the Alpine Way.

I ran into Diane in the line-up for the Jumbo Jet. It took her a few minutes to remember me, but when she did, she asked me if I could give her 50 dollars. I enquired about her friend and she mentioned that she had lost her in the Carlsberg Pavillion.

"She doesn't know how to have fun," she remarked

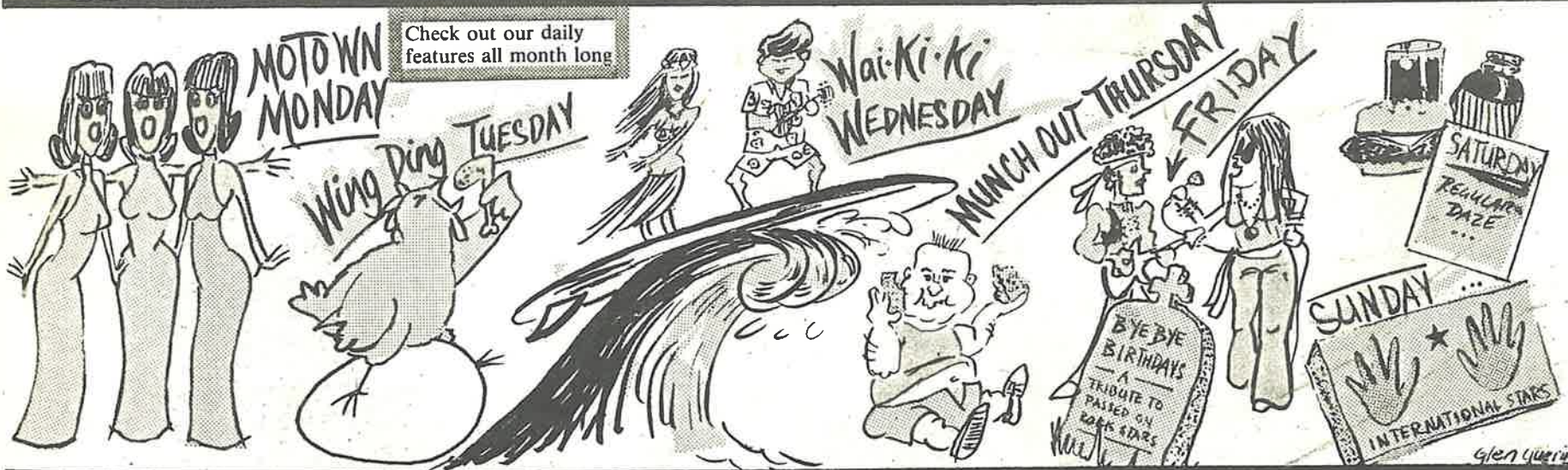
The Double Loop lurches towards the empty sky, carrying no human passengers, while the Jumbo Jet has stuffed too many in its rustic chairs. Diane splits to look for a jock, and I leave the grounds empty-headed. Don't get gypped, my father told me.

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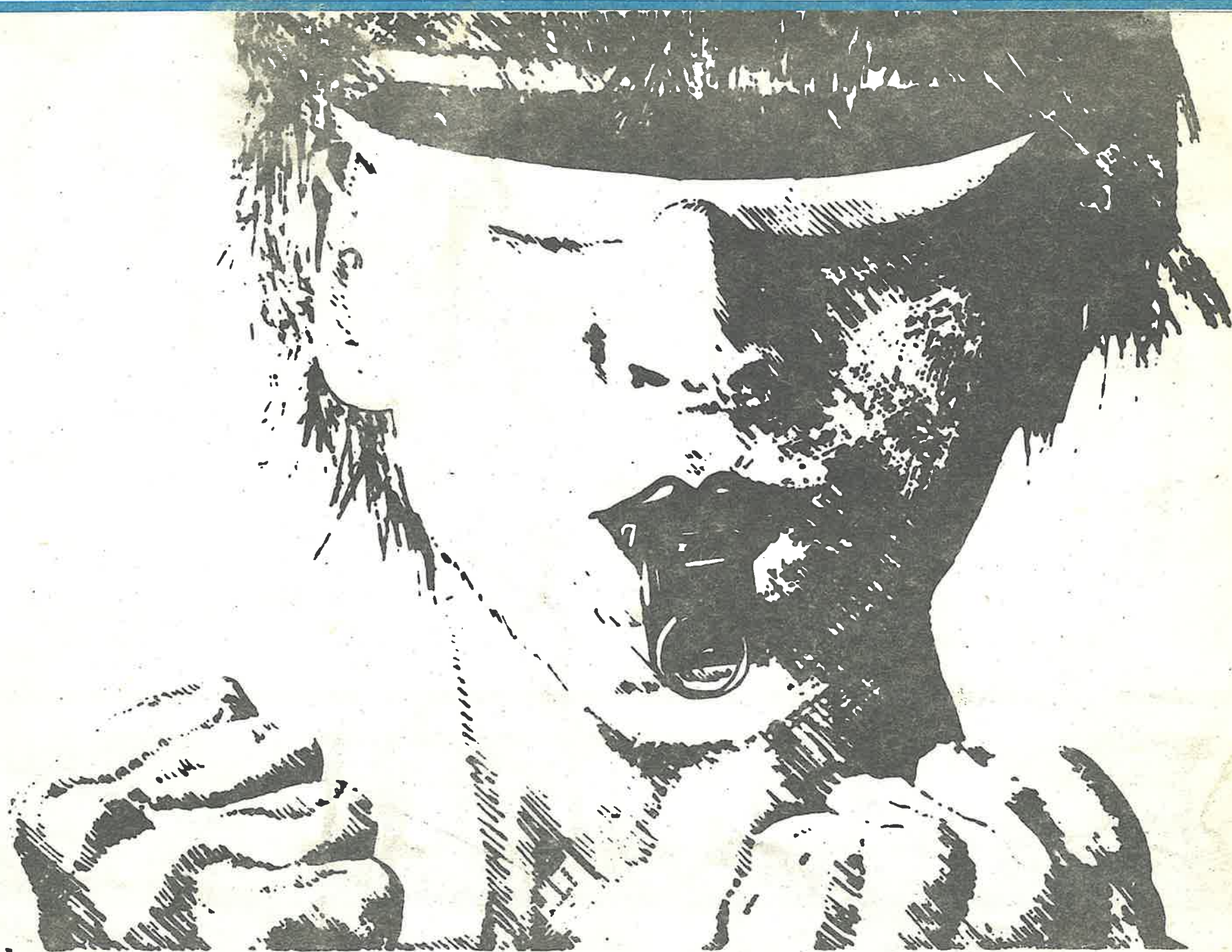
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